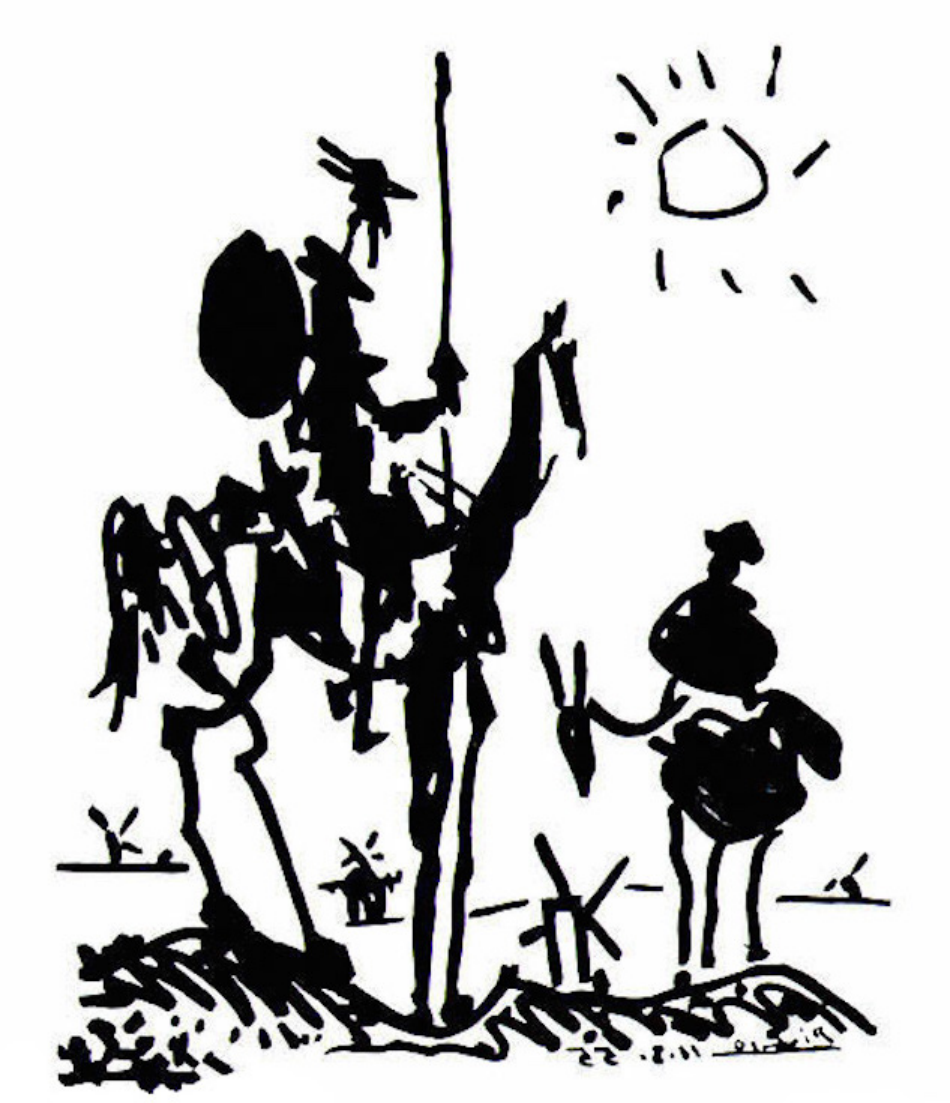
Sketches of the Once Upon a Time

A Few Epiphanies and Other Hallmark Moments



MICHAEL J. HOLSHOUSER

Sketches of the Once Upon a Time
A Few Epiphanies and Other Hallmark Moments
https://sketchesoftheonceuponatime.blogspot.com/
© Michael J. Holshouser 2020
World Rights Reserved

Michael J. Holshouser
1112 Cedar Creek Drive, Unit 4
Modesto, California 95355-5213
The United States of America
mjholshouser@gmail.com

Pronunciation: Holtzhowzer

All have the express written encouragement
To distribute this creation freely to any and all
Who have the eyes to see and the ears to hear
The mystery in which each and every one
Equally participates in so many ways

Table of Contents

Preface … 6

Sketches of the Once Upon a Time … 13

A Poem for Michael

Lyle

The First Koan

The Nightmare

Manhood

The New Tack

The Epiphany Voice

Old School Daze

Commentaries on Living

The Fearful Body

That Voice

A Tribute to My Mother

What Happened to You?

Sure Smells Like Cookies

The Town Crier

The I That I Dream

The Historian

Appellations

The Button

The Special Executive

The Bad Penny

Definitive v. Tentative

These Many Thoughts

On Solving Problems

The Solitary Existence

The True Cathedral

Without History

One Boss in the Field

Marriage

French Press

The Miscalculated Wave

How It Started

Dean Evans

From a Back-And-Forth with Len Howard

From a Back-and-Forth with Chris Bava

Rural Living in the California Central Valley

The Entrée into Manhood

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

Always Look Twice

Rich Man's Life on a Dime

A Martial Inclination

Three Vague Sunday School Memories

Lena and Shannon

Home to Mom

Frugal Roots

Throw Away the Key

Mrs. Hoight

Mr. Przybyła

Free Phone

The Banyan Seed of Corruption

Most Responsible Kid I Have Ever Seen

A Tale of Two Worlds

The Forklift Driver

The Hanging Life

Medicine Bag

And Then There Was the Time …

Random Babble

Michael J. Holshouser: Life Resume … 29

To Whom It May Concern … 34

A Letter to Karen Hesli, Former Oak Grove School Director … 36

A Letter to Arthur Braverman, Oak Grove School Teacher … 48

An Email to Professor John McWhorter, Senior Fellow at Columbia University … 49

A List of Injuries and Strains … 52

My Back Pages: Michael Holshouser … 54

My Back Pages: Mark Bava … 56

Hughson Celebrates Its Centennial This Weekend … 61

Funeral Playlist … 63

Evolution of The Stillness Before Time … 67

Just a Clarification & Another Way of Putting It … 69 & 72

Preface

Greetings,

For your amusement, a few epiphanies and other hallmark moments.

This work is blogged at:

Sketches of the Once Upon a Time
https://sketchesoftheonceuponatime.blogspot.com/

Writing has been an enjoyable process ever since I first began toying with prose; scribbling poetry, keeping journals, corresponding with friends and acquaintances during the college daze. The philosophical/mystical/whatever-you-want-to-call-them thoughts, that have been popping into mind since 1989, have always been very out-of-the-blue spontaneous. Nothing planned or forced about them. They are being shared on the off chance that others may find them of interest, though, quite frankly, it really does not matter if no one else ever even reads them, for I am, first and foremost, my own audience. I got mine, so to speak. I played my little part. I had my share of fun. And it is, as it has ever been, up to each to discern their own, on their own.

There are really no followers in this Don Quixote quest; only earnest seekers, who waylay their desires and fears and dreads, enough to discern that which is the end to doubt, the end to dueling with windmills. “Yay” if it is your fate to figure it out. “Oh well” if it is not. And “so it goes” either way, really. Ecclesiastes 1:2 is always a good reminder: “Vanity of vanities,” saith the Preacher, “Vanity of vanities. All is vanity.” Awareness can only, with great effort, regain control, regain sovereignty, from the usurper, imagination, creator of all that is time, creator of all that is space. Creator of all that is illusion, has never been anything more than illusion, will never be anything more than illusion. Only as real as the given moment.

“The Stillness Before Time” is the original work that came together in 1992, including mostly aphorisms, an essay, a newspaper question-and-answer, ten reflections, and lists of both movies and books. Though an early self-published version, long since edited and expanded, can be purchased at major booksellers, a downloadable copy is available, no charge, at the link below. There are also links to a variety of blogs of other creations by me, along with links to many writings of a similar nature, by thinkers and seers from across all times, across all geographies. "The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim" is the second published book, and is both blogged and available as a PDF download.

The “Breadcrumbs” titles, published annually since 2015, all include the core chapters: Leftovers, Soundbites, Breadcrumbs. In the Breadcrumbs chapters, I unleash thoughts of a more personal nature than in the other two. All just to show I was ensconced in a living, breathing, relativity mundane, oftentimes foolish, mortal mind-body. An actor playing the hand that was dealt; same as everyone else, vain as everyone else. No need to sculpt me into more than I was. No need for myths, nor legends, nor fables, nor miracles, nor cult followings, nor any other fictions, any other absurdities, over to which the human mind, and all its imaginary history, has so often given itself. The Breadcrumbs chapters prove me again and again to be yet another Shakespearian player, as full of the limited and arbitrary as anyone else born into this dream of space and time. So please be sure not to shape me, or these many random thoughts, into some dogmatic absurdity. Use them as a launchpad, not an orbit.

“The Return to Wonder” blog is a compendium of aphorisms not included in the three other works: The Stillness Before Time, The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim, and Breadcrumbs. It originally totaled 3,000 pages formatted in 300 ten-page chapters written since 1990-ish. A gradual editing that will likely never be completed, is changing that dynamic into something of a mishmash.

Please note that this sort of wordplay is very haphazard, way too much work to put into any order. Probably best read it in bits and pieces in the here and there. One of those open-to-any-page works. Especially well-suited for coffee shops, coffee tables, and porcelain thrones.

Also note that all writings are always subject to updates and editing, so if you are interested in the most current version – before this house of cards comes tumbling down, and the world grows large again – downloading PDF copies every once and a while might be a reasonable discipline. This applies especially to the current year of Breadcrumbs, which could well be an annual project until the last wheezing breath, though frankly, the temptation to stop writing entirely is not off the table. It is a pleasant way to pass some of the countdown remaining, but it is unlikely there is much ground that has not been wandered by this frame of reference far more than enough already. No matter how many times Sisyphus rolls the boulder up the mountain, it is more than a little doubtful that the blind men and their true-believer followers, will ever discern, ever realize, ever embrace, the elephant in the middle of the room, without fabricating some new form of absurdity. It is the way we roll, it is the way we have always rolled, it is the way we will, far more than probably, always roll. Every species has its limitations, and we have in this mind’s eye, far-exceeded ours.

That said, if you do find these many thoughts at all worth preserving, for whatever times are ahead for this world and all its life forms, please feel free to share them with others who might also appreciate them. Else they may well swiftly slip back into the timeless oblivion from whence they came.

So it goes, either way. I played my part, I said my piece, I had my fun.

All the best,

M

P.S. For best viewing online, using the largest screen you have available to explore my little theme park, is suggested. Scrolling down and down on a phone screen is just not going to give you the same entrée.

P.P.S. Regarding the name Yaj Ekim ... It is just a reverse spelling of the first and middle names ... Michael Jay Holshouser ... Mike Jay ... Yaj Ekim.

P.P.P.S. Coincidently, make of it whatever you will, or will not, Yaj is an Indian boy’s name meaning worshipper, sacrifice, another name for Shiva, a sage. And Ekim is a Turkish name for October meaning “sowing” (of seeds). All kinds of absurdity can be read into that by the many so-inclined – none of which was in mind when I came up with the idea to reverse the letters to my name. See P.P.S. for details.

P.P.P.P.S. Yes, I am Shiva. And so are You. No, I am not Shiva. And neither are you. Irony and paradox rule.

The Stillness Before Time
Reflections From a Fellow Sojourner

There is really only one Way.
It is without division or boundary.
It is without name or theology.
Awareness is its scripture.
Here now, its venue.
You, its witness.
Your life, the journey.

Website
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com

Blog
https://thestillnessbeforetime.blogspot.com

PDF
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thestillnessbeforetime.pdf

The Original Works

The Stillness Before Time,
Reflections From a Fellow Sojourner
https://thestillnessbeforetime.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thestillnessbeforetime.pdf

Including:
Of the Human Journey
Got God?
Ten Reflections

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim
https://theponderingsofyajekim.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/theponderingsofyajekim.pdf

Breadcrumbs 2015
Bits and Pieces From a Dream of Time
https://breadcrumbs2015.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/breadcrumbs2015.pdf

Breadcrumbs 2018
Bits and Pieces From a Dream of Time
https://breadcrumbs2018.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/breadcrumbs2018.pdf

Breadcrumbs 2019
Bits and Pieces From a Dream of Time
https://breadcrumbs2019.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/breadcrumbs2019.pdf

Breadcrumbs 2020
Bits and Pieces From a Dream of Time
https://breadcrumbs2020yajekim.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/breadcrumbs2020.pdf

Breadcrumbs 2021
Bits and Pieces From a Dream of Time
https://breadcrumbs2021.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/breadcrumbs2021.pdf

Breadcrumbs 2022
Bits and Pieces From a Dream of Time
https://breadcrumbs2022.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/breadcrumbs2022.pdf

Breadcrumbs 2023 & Beyond
Bits and Pieces From a Dream of Time
https://breadcrumbs2023.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/breadcrumbs2023.pdf

The Return to Wonder
Field Notes from the Unknown
(Major edit underway – New copy colored blue and green)
https://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thereturntowonder.pdf

The Derivative Collection

Aftershocks Autumn 2024
https://aftershocksautumn2024.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/aftershocks2024.pdf

Frames of Reference
Peering Through the Windows of Perception
https://framesofreferenceperception.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/framesofreference.pdf

Imagination: The Great Usurper
https://imaginationthegreatusurper.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/imaginationthegreatusurper.pdf

Jesus on Prophets
What Any Seer Likely Faces Returning to the Cave of Origin
https://jesusonprophets.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/jesusonprophets.pdf

Lost in Translation
The Human Paradigm's Linguistic Muddle
https://lostintranslationyajekim.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/lostintranslation.pdf

Michael's Rabbit Hole
A Selection of Breadcrumbs & Other Aphorisms
https://michaelsrabbithole.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/michaelsrabbithole.pdf

Of Meaning & Purpose
Ponderings About the Futility of It All
https://ofmeaningandpurpose.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/ofmeaningandpurpose.pdf

Of Noise & Silence
Contemplations on the Vibrations of Consciousness
https://ofnoiseandsilence.blogspot.com
https://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/ofnoiseandsilence.pdf

Standouts From the Return to Wonder Edit
Selections From the First Sixteen Chapters
https://standoutsfromthereturntowonderedit.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/standouts.pdf

The Call of the Eternal
A Conversation With My Self
https://thecalloftheeternal.blogspot.com
https://www.thestillnessbeforetime.com/thecalloftheeternal.pdf

The Gordian Knot of Ethical Thinking
https://thegordianknotofethicalthinking.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thegordianknotofethicalthinking.pdf

The 'And More' Collection

Doubt, Doubt & More Doubt
https://doubtdoubtandmoredoubt.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/doubtdoubtandmoredoubt.pdf

Grubs, Grubs & More Grubs
(a.k.a., Blobs, Blobs & More Blobs)
https://grubsgrubsandmoregrubs.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/grubsgrubsandmoregrubs.pdf

History, History & More History
https://historyhistoryandmorehistory.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/historyhistoryandmorehistory.pdf

Imagination, Imagination & More Imagination
https://imaginationandmoreimagination.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/imaginationimaginationandmoreimagination.pdf

Mystery, Mystery & More Mystery
https://mysterymysteryandmoremystery.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/mysterymysteryandmoremystery.pdf

Patterns, Patterns & More Patterns
https://evenmorepatterns.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/patternspatternsandmorepatterns.pdf

Reincarnation, Reincarnation & More Reincarnation
https://reincarnationandmorereincarnation.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/reincarnationreincarnationandmorereincarnation.pdf

Science, Science & More Science
https://yajekimscienceandmorescience.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/sciencescienceandmorescience.pdf

Titles, Titles & More Titles
https://evenmoretitles.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/titlestitlesandmoretitles.pdf

Even More Titles, Titles & More Titles
https://theevenmoreseries.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/theevenmoreseries.pdf

The Singles Collection

59 Moments to The Way It Is (And Is Not)
https://59momentstothewayitisandisnot.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/59momentstothewayitisandisnot.pdf

Of the Human Journey
Along with 'Got God?' and 'Ten Reflections'
https://ofthehumanjourney.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/ofthehumanjourney.pdf

The Mystery of the Mystery
https://themysteryofthemysteryseries.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/themysteryofthemysteryseries.pdf

The Real is Discovering
https://therealisdiscoveringseries.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/therealisdiscoveringseries.pdf

To Be, or Not to Be
https://thetobeornottobeseries.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thetobeornottobeseries.pdf

Who Was the First?
https://thewhowasthefirstseries.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thewhowasthefirstseries.pdf

The Sidebar Collection

A Short List of Books for the Up and Coming
Some Written Works That May Help Get the Young Up to Speed
https://listofbooksfortheupandcoming.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/ashortlistofbooksfortheupandcoming.pdf

Breadcrumbs: The Original Blog
https://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction_28.html

Conversations
A Variety of Letters, Emails, Texts, & Sundry Odds 'n Ends
https://conversationsyajekim.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/conversations.pdf

Definitions
An Incomplete Selection of Contemplative Definitions
https://definitionsyajekim.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/definitions.pdf

Ditties for the Bluegrass Pyre
https://dittiesforthebluegrasspyre.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/dittiesforthebluegrasspyre.pdf

Jester Amok
https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10212852298760058&type=3
https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1311100495387&type=3

My (Not Quite) Haiku
https://mynotquitehaiku.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/mynotquitehaiku.pdf

Once Upon a Christmas
https://onceuponchristmas.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/onceuponachristmas.pdf

Possible Last Words & Epitaphs
https://possiblelastwordsandepitaphs.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/possiblelastwordsandepitaphs.pdf

Sketches of the Once Upon a Time
A Few Epiphanies and Other Hallmark Moments
https://sketchesoftheonceuponatime.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/sketchesoftheonceuponatime.pdf

Spam Responses (a.k.a., WTF Is This Shit!?)
https://spamresponsesakawtfisthisshit.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/spamresponsesakawtfisthisshit.pdf

The Corollaries of Yaj Ekim
https://corollariesyajekim.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thecorollariesofyajekim.pdf

The Standard Ripostes
The Scribe's Go-to Responses to This and That in the Day-To-Day
https://thestandardripostes.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thestandardripostes.pdf

Uncle Sam Says
https://whatunclesamsays.blogspot.com
https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1311088415085&type=3

(Please note all writings are subject to annual updates and editing,
so downloading current PDF copies every once and a while,
might be a good idea if You want the most current version)

Sketches of the Once Upon a Time

A Poem for Michael

His goals are few,
with no worries to pursue.
A life well-stirred,
as variety is to stew.
Branching from his native view,
He's learned a thing or two:
How to handle a machine that spews,
Managing a newspaper crew,
How a lens can capture you,
Writing philosophy of the zoo,
Even joined a staff or two,
To teach others what to do.
Now he speaks with a clue,
Of how he's gained his world-view.
There's nothing left to misconstrue,
He's living life impromptu!

Rhonda Allen
Chico, California, 2002

Lyle

As I approached the last wisps of childhood, my best friend, Lyle Bibens, died of leukemia.
He was the oldest of three adopted children by the couple at whose wedding my parents had met.
Our families often spent cordial evenings together in our homes, as well as many vacations,
camping at Seacliff Beach on Monterey Bay along the Northern California coast.
Lyle and I were bonded from the earliest memories by countless adventures,
whose vague memories have been fondly recalled many times in the years since.

It was my first human death.

Out alone on the lawn in front of our ranch house in Hughson about a month later,
the reality of death suddenly dawned on me: I would never see Lyle again.
I wept uncontrollably at the loss of relationship we had so enjoyed.

As the tears dried, without any prompting, I took from his memory the quality I most admired:
His audacity to step into any situation and start conversations with strangers as we wandered about.
For me, who was at that youthful time much more reserved, it was always something of a shock.

This was perhaps the first time, and certainly not the last, that an epiphany twinkling,
a moment of sudden revelation or insight, clearly made itself known,

in the dawning of this philosophical mindset.

The First Koan

Sometime in the very way hazy long ago, cousin Debbie Hunt,
had a boyfriend named Teryl, who was my intro to the Buddhist slant.
At some point, the three of us were hiking Mount Tamalpais in the Bay Area,
and I uttered some comment about how astounding San Francisco Bay must have been,
before Manifest Destiny took root, and things begin their descent into the world I so decry today.
Teryl's Zen-ish response was that it was really the same as it had always been.
It was likely my first koan; one I am still trying to crack.

The Nightmare

Dreams have never been a high priority in this existence,
But there was a recurring one that began back in the years before adolescence.
One in which I felt helplessly, hopelessly, powerlessly trapped beneath a suffocating, bean-like torrent,
Which only ended when I finally realized it was my spirit being conditioned by the world.
It may well have been the first intuition of all that has since transpired.

Manhood

One agreeable day in high school in the junior or senior year,
While chatting casually with a small group of male peers,
it suddenly dawned on me that I needed to learn to become a man.
From that day forward I would take as my own, emulate, as I had from Lyle,
any qualities esteemed from the many as yet unknown men whose paths mine would cross.

The New Tack

I had taken three years of drafting since the freshman year of high school.
My relationship with the hundred-ish peers I had been with since kindergarten,
in the small rural town of Hughson at the center of the Central Valley of California,
was sociable, but relatively aloof, so sitting alone at the drafting table for hours and hours,
with the thought that I might someday become a draftsman, or even architect, was a natural fit.
The drafting room was at the west edge of the campus across from the band room in another building.
One day while working away, listening to the band practicing, I suddenly realized a deep yearning,
to be more sociable, to participate with others and my future in an as yet un-articulable way.
That was my final year of drafting, and a senior year very different from anything,
theretofore experienced in the first twelve years of public education,
and the first of many tacks in the voyage that fostered this.

The Epiphany Voice

The Hughson Union High School Awards Ceremony for the Class of 1972,
was held out on the old football field a few days before graduation.
I was called up seven times for awards of recognition and small scholarships.
Looking out at my applauding classmates as I walked down the steps of the small stage,
the epiphany voice clearly stated in its ethereal way: “Surely, there must be more to life than this.”

Old School Daze

What pleasure I get from playing with language to the best of my moderate ability.
Thank the gods for computers, for word processing and its spelling, thesaurus, and grammar support.
It makes clear the remark the old woman made about there being so many spelling errors,
back when I briefly soloed the Waterford News in the old school daze,
of manual typewriters, erasable paper, and whiteout.
And real cameras and darkrooms, too.
Oh, how I so often long for that simpler time,
Where a pleasant sense of solitude and serenity reigned,
And the world with all its tangles was far away, only barely important.

Commentaries on Living

Sometime during my years at Modesto Junior College, while in the library walking through the stacks,
three small hardback, pastel-colored books leaped into the awareness and drew me like a magnet.
They were the “Commentaries on Living” by Jiddu Krishnamurti, an Indian philosopher.
Checked out the first one, and though it seemed worth reading, it made me sluggish.
So, I fairly soon returned it, and a week later nonchalantly pilfered all three.
It would not be until I had entered the working world a few years later,
that I was finally able to read them without drifting off into drowse mode.
It was the beginning of a lifetime of quixotic exploration, both inner and outer.
Finally, ten or twenty or whatever years later, in a twinge of rarely felt compunction,
I bought paperback versions, and dropped all three into the MJC sidewalk book return box.
Rest assured, that it was a move bemoaned many times since.
Wondering if they are still there …

The Fearful Body

Russ Kalen was one of the more than a few chiropractors through the years,
who spent many sessions trying to put my Humpty-Dumpty body back together again.
I recall him one day stating as he popped something back into place that it would not long stay:
“Mike, I think your body is afraid of you.”

That Voice

I was driving west into the late afternoon sun on my Honda CB350F motorcycle.
It had been a long day with a girlfriend in La Grange where she lived with mother and son.
There were two winding ways to get to Waterford where I lived in a trailer over twenty miles away.
As I came to the deciding fork, the epiphany voice in my weary head clearly said:
"if you go this way, you will be in an accident."
Sure enough, as I came to a corner on Lake Road somewhere east of Turlock Lake,
Fatigue caused me to brake badly and start fishtailing toward some ugly-looking barbed-wire.
It was take it down and risk the asphalt, or tack on and find out what piercing rusty metal could do.
I chose the former and carry the reminders to this day.

Moral of the story: Do not ignore that voice.

A Tribute to My Mother

Something I wrote and framed for my mother's 94th birthday.

My Mother

If I have not said or implied it elsewhere,
In this thirty-years-plus philosophical walkabout,
It should well be counted a good destiny's good fortune,
To have been given a mother, such as I have had.
So calm, so rational, so intelligent, so good.
A modest, humble-to-the roots woman,
Of whom Buddha would be in awe.
Beverly Jean Kurtz-Holshouser,
Is her name, born September 4, 1929.
In this worldly mind's quantum dreamtime,
She, such an unfathomable part, has performed.
She is the source, the seed, the blessing,
For this scribe's life work and play.

Her loving son, Michael Jay

What Happened to You?

Many mothers incline to filter their grown-up sons as the ten-year-olds they so long ago were.
How often have we heard ones with mass murderers on death row tearfully declaring their innocence?
After returning from my odyssey, mine became increasingly aware that I was no longer her little boy.
One day, out of some blue, she exclaimed about the man I had become, "What happened to you!?"
"Life," was my answer.

Sure Smells Like Cookies

The first seven years of my childhood,
were spent in a newly-built G.I. Bill three-bedroom home,
on East Pine Street, at the time a twelve-house cul-de-sac in Hughson, California.
There is little to tell of the early years before moving to the 30-acre peach ranch on Hatch Road,
but two anecdotes are standouts, shared years later by Betty Goesch, a neighbor at the corner of 7th and Pine.
The first is that at some point I wandered the block, and turned on who know how many water faucets.
The second was that my mother would take me down to Betty's for a morning coffee klatch.
Betty always brought out cookies and milk, and I must have been somewhat vocal,
about shamelessly asking for them before they were courteously offered,
because Betty says my mother told me I should not ask any more.
My response, according to Betty, was to enter her home,
take a whiff, and announce that it "sure smells like cookies."
Nothing remarkable, nothing extraordinary, but mildly amusing that the,
rascal-rogue-cad-rake-blackguard-scalawag-scoundrel-reprobate-ne'er-do-well nature,
was more than a little evident at such an early and supposedly, purportedly, ostensibly, innocent age.

The Town Crier

Have since those so-long-ago college years, had a penchant for being a town crier of sorts.
A handful of Circle K Club newsletters during the last year of college,
The Waterford News a year or two out of college,
yearbooks for the Oak Grove and Reyn Franca Schools,
and newsletters for foster families while at Creative Alternatives.

The I That I Dream

The I that I dream came into existence in Hughson,
in Stanislaus County, in California, in the United States of America.
Specifically, 37°36′11″N 120°52′1″W of this our Gaia, speck in the Cosmos that it is.
This mind-body is male, Caucasian, American English-speaking, with an all-rounder set of abilities.
It was raised on a small peach farm by decent parents a mile outside a decent rural town.
It was given a generic education that ended with a generic business degree,
followed up a decade later with a generic teaching credential.
It worked a wide variety of occupations in a wide variety of geographies.
It interacted with a wide variety of people and participated in a wide variety of experiences.
At age 36, it began what would evolve into a substantial body of written work.
What a remarkable thing the happenstance of being conceived.
What a remarkable thing all the happenstances that happen along the way.
And as for having free will, well, some claim it true, but these eyes see it a dubious assumption.

The Historian

A history teacher in college one day out of the blue pointed to a few of us and said,
"You are a historian … You are a historian … You are a historian … You are a historian … "
At the time it meant nothing – zipped past the youthful head of innocence, so to speak –
but in the years since, the realization of what he meant has taken unforeseen wings.

Appellations

Appellations by which I may be known,
or much more likely unknown:
Michael Jay Holshouser
Michael J. Holshouser
M. J. Holshouser
M. Holshouser
J. Holshouser
Jay Holshouser
Mike Holshouser
The solo initial: M
The nickname: Holtz
All three initials: M.J.H.
Mike Jay reversed: Yaj Ekim
And an infrequent nom de plume
Using a blend of ancestral favorites:
Andrew James Kurtz, a.k.a., Drew Kurtz

The Button

Sometime back in the early years after college,
as awareness of the world and all its horrors grew daily greater,
I told my mother that if I had a button I could push to wipe away all of humankind,
and give this spinning orb back to all our fellow earthlings, I would push it without a second thought.
But, other than mutually assured nuclear annihilation, there is no button of that sort,
and so, instead, a life of contemplation, and perhaps one day, suicide.
Much simpler to die to the world than push any button,
and that is certainly no simple task, either.

The Special Executive

My sixth grade James Bondian spy organization when I was wearing glasses:
SPECS: The Special Executive for Espionage, Counterintelligence, and Spies.

The Bad Penny

"The Bad Penny," Lee Hoffmann used to call me. Why, I'll never tell.

Definitive v. Tentative

Glynda Lee thought the title should be "A Stillness Before Time,"
but a more definitive "The" has always sounded better to me.

These Many Thoughts

These many thoughts are left for humankind's unfolding reverie,
written by a witness, a seer, who was born in 1953 A.D.
to what duration he cannot at this writing say.
Geographically, it was called Northern California,
during the agricultural-industrial-technological epoch,
of the United States of America, a nation-state,
in what seemed the zenith and early decline,
of civilization as he elected to perceive it.
But history knows many such epochs,
so the accuracy of all predictions in time,
is for future scholars to ponder and pontificate,
as they always have, and undoubtedly, always will.

On Solving Problems

Unlike other interviewees during their initial career quest,
who ardently, breathlessly, mindlessly asserted they "loved" problems,
my youthful comeback was likely more to the point: "I absolutely hate problems."
"So much so that I quash them as soon as they appear on any horizon."
Who got the job? Well, I have had many, and abided most,
for as long as they were tolerably amusing.

The Solitary Existence

The domesticated existence was nothing I ever much cared to do for any great length of time.
Playing house, raising children, living in debt, mowing lawns, dealing with rat dogs,
giving up solitude, missing out on adventures, becoming a couch potato,
trying to please anyone but my Self, held no lasting appeal.

The True Cathedral

To all Christians and other faithful true believers:
While you have paid out ten percent of your hard-earned treasury,
to sit in hard wooden pews, listen to mind-numbing sermons, and sing tedious hymns,
pretending to love people you loathe, fearing a deity who is but an invention of irrational imagination,
idolizing a martyr long dead that you might well detest if he were to actually show up,
I have spent many a Sunday sunrise enjoying long, contemplative wanders,
breathing in and breathing out the one and only true cathedral.

Without History

"Without history, we are nothing," a Merritt Hulst long ago said.
And now, I would say to him, "Even with history, we are nothing."

One Boss in the Field

"There can only be one boss in the field," I remember my father muttering under his breath,
After settling a wrangle with a crew contractor during the peak of some long-ago peach harvest.

Marriage

Had over ten women bring up marriage in this lifetime walkabout. And many if not all of them, would have made good partners, good mothers, good mates, had I been more into playing the domestic life. Was always drawn to more intelligent, rational women; no doubt because my mother was.

French Press

The reason I like making French roast-brewed coffee alone in my little studio man cave, is that I get to enjoy the process of grinding the beans to dust in an aging Krups grinder, stirring the mix in a Frieling French press several times, with the long Frieling measuring-stirring tool, and then swishing the silty brew in my Chubby stainless-steel mug whenever I take a sip. That way I relish the texture of the silt that slips through the two screens, and get whatever caffeine is left unsqueezed. Very Turkish, very quantum.

The Miscalculated Wave

These many thoughts began bubbling out in 1989,
After a head and neck injury invoked by a miscalculated wave,
While boogie boarding with my fifth-sixth grade class in Southern Kaliforny.
It was the finale of a short teaching phase, and the entrée to an assortment of switchbacks,
In the ever-kaleiscoping wanderfest of imagination, in work and recreation and every other whatever,
That has materialized all this whimsical chitter-chatter into this quantum playground.
It has been my way to allow spontaneity to fashion this destiny.

How It Started

After an until-mid-30's adulthood of wandering about in every way life offered, words started coming to mind in 1989, while finishing up the second and last year of teaching fifth-sixth grade at Oak Grove School in Ojai, California. The Stillness Before Time is a random selection of aphorisms, that a book agent in Chico during the early-90's writing period, suggested I put together from the first 300-ish pages that had been transcribed at that point in time. It could have been an entirely different book. See Standouts from the Return to Wonder to get a sense of the different choices that might have been made, or added, if it had been made a longer work.

Dean Evans

One early morning sunrise, soon after arriving in Chico after leaving Oak Grove School 1990-ish, I was sitting at a small table outside the Upper Crust coffee shop in the downtown. It was block away from California State University, Chico, my alma mater as a business major back in the 70's. There was another fellow – tall, lean, long-haired and bearded, deep-voiced, about my age, could have passed for a white Jesus in some movie – sitting on the other side of the doorway. We began chatting at some point – instantly friends for life – and it proved to be a defining moment in this philosophical walkabout. Dean Evans was a high-wire electrician and autodidactic artist, who took to my writings, and ended up being a key catalyst in their gradual journey from scribblings in notebooks, to the digital format that current times allow. Their first entrée into the public sphere was in his two downtown coffee shop art shows. Dean taped several aphorisms, printed up on white typewriter paper, between his paintings. That led to someone connecting me to a local book agent, who was the one who suggested I select the 250-ish aphorisms from the 300 pages that I had digitalized by that point, that would become the first book, and years later, title to The Stillness Before Time website. The book never took off as anything marketable – it was too esoteric for the book agent, as well as any other publishers I have ever contacted – but Dean Evans was instrumental in everything that happened since. His "You are perfect. Pure gold. Brighter than the sun" is part of the flagship book's preface, and "It's a god-eat-god world" forwards the second book, The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim. He and I, along with his wife, Linda, and children, Jasper and Rafael, and their community of friends, had many memorable adventures together in the Chico decade, and a number of visits through the post-Chico years thereafter.

From a Back-And-Forth with Len Howard

Along with a moderate ABC education in small rural town Hughson, California, you can also thank Roland Russell for nonchalantly suggesting in early already mind-shaking college: "Mike, why don't you write poetry; it's kind of fun." There was also a brief stint running the Waterford News early out of college, where I quickly learned to always have pen and paper and camera at hand as I wandered through the small-town metropolis and surrounding countryside searching for newsworthy fare. As for any brilliance, as you call it, it seems to be more about being something of a receiving unit, with the discipline to write down most the things that come to mind, along with a certain knack for word association, coupled nicely with an adroitness with word processing, greatly aided by the spellcheck and thesaurus functions. As to whether what I have written will ever be well known, or make any real difference in the future of humankind, or the welfare of the planet and all our fellow earthlings, I have many doubts and no time machine. A little too late to make the difference I would be seeking, anyway. I am afraid we are a little too whacked out at this stage of the game to turn the Titanic a less toxic direction. So, I have come to consider it an enjoyable diversion that fills some of the existential reverie, and am content that a few people in the here and there like yourself find it interesting.

From a Back-and-Forth with Chris Bava

Never met U.G. Krishnamurti, but did read a couple of his books toward the end of my stay teaching at J. Krishnamurti's Oak Grove School in Ojai back in the late 80's. Definitely one of the many wake-up callers. I'd read and listened to J. Krishnamurti for years, but he was dead by the time I got a teaching credential, and going down there was less about him than playing out the teaching game in an interesting environment. Oak Grove was a pleasant experience, but after two years I was done with both it and teaching. Moved up to Chico for a decade, over to Arcata for eight months at Humboldt State, and then back to Creative Alternatives in Stanislaus County.

Rural Living in the California Central Valley

Frugality and austerity have been founding directives in this existence. Have spent the Turlock working and retirement years in a rented studio with a wall air-conditioner unit, that I stopped using several years ago. During winters, I layer up and turn on a small stovetop burner, as necessary. In summers, it is wet t-shirts, the Brenda Athletic Club pool, and Geerbucks – my nearby Starbucks on Geer Road – where I must often layer to stay warm in the AC-chilled lobby. I was raised in this geography, on a small peach ranch, in an old wooden house. All it had was an oil stove and a wall air-conditioner in the hallway. The ranching life in the Central Valley of California was about enduring its version of inclement weather. Whether driving the tractor or grading peaches for hours and hours, I learned to matter-of-factly, without complaint, just take the hot, the cold, the dust, and the peach fuzz. And then there were the tree branches slapping my face, grabbing my glasses, and sometimes, but for martial art-level reactions, almost dragging me off the tractor. Having to wear layers during winter, or be sweaty and dirty in summer, were just facts of life. The cold water of the canal across Hatch Road where we lived, was the after-work treat, and sometimes the bath of the day during harvest There are hotter places and there are colder places, is how I have come to rationalize it.

The Entrée into Manhood

My introduction to manhood began at age seven, when I first began driving the very well-worn Ferguson tractor, the spine of our thirty-acre peach ranch, where I worked alongside my father and grandfather; both mild, unassuming, Depression-steeled, hard-working men. My father said, in his straight-forward manner, “You’re going to hurt yourself, and the best thing I’ve found to do, is to chew off the loose flesh, suck the blood until it stops, and then get back on the tractor.”

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

For a decade sometime in the twenties and thirties, I read Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert Pirsig, seven or eight times. And it was never the same book. Not because I had skipped over anything, but because my frame of reference at the time could not see, could not discern, whatever point Pirsig was making. Wisdom is the distillation of experience, and it is never-ending, from the first breath, to the last.

Always Look Twice

Early in the driving career, Francis Noeller, a Hughson farmer and friend to my father,
Said something in passing that has always stuck with me: Always look twice.
Those times when I did not, and should have, were always reminders,
That roads are the jungle trails of these, our modern times.
And one must always be attentive, if the goal is to survive the day.

Rich Man's Life on a Dime

Rich man's life on a dime, is how this life has spun.
Why go to all that work, when the pearl was there for the taking.
Of course, being content to merely be, remaining single, never going into debt,
And being happy to sleep on a couch, or in a van, were key enablers in my unplanned epoch.
All the monotony it would have taken to become rich and famous and powerful,
Would have been far too toxic, far too boring, for this plebeian spirit.
Far more interesting to swing from adventure to adventure.
To let the mystery set this destiny's mortal course.
And somehow, it has reached this moment,
This keyboard, this cup of coffee.
How could I not be content?

A Martial Inclination

Though I have never been a violent sort – am a happy drunk, so to speak – and have never been in a real fight at this writing, I have always had a casual, autodidactic interest in strategic and tactical thinking. In the younger daze, the second floor of the ranch tank house was my castle fort; armed with dirt clods and a pair of binoculars for keeping a lookout. Was drawn to chess and football in the high school years, and in the college years, some very realistic Avalon Hill and Strategy & Tactics wargaming boardgames. Missed the late Vietnam War by a high number – 237 is etched in memory – in the last draft in 1972. Would have gone without hesitation at that naive age, but looking back, feel very fortunate to have never had to endure the real thing. Experienced it and other wars, vicariously watching who knows how many documentaries and movies, as well as an endless parade of cowboy, underworld, and every variety of shoot-em-up fare. Later in life, I put together a fairly large gun collection for just-in-case self-defense, paper plinking at gun ranges, and shooting squirrels, mostly out in nearby hilly cattle country owned by friends. Got into paintball for a few years, too. And along with guns, I collected lots of swords and knives and sundry other boy toys, as well. Also, a significant library of military theory and history books. Started some aikido and tai chi classes a few times, but did not have the interest to pursue them long. Have generally always avoided conflict by talking things out rationally, walking away, or skirting situations that harbored the potential for violence. Am not necessarily very good at many of these martial things; certainly not as an older man in decline. Just enough to get the gist of the harshness of our planet-of-the-apes paradigm, and lucky to have never had to hurt or kill anyone, so far. But, as Jack Palance famously uttered in the movie, City Slickers, "The day ain't over."

Three Vague Sunday School Memories

Three things I very vaguely remember about the year or three I spent attending,
The old wooden Methodist Church a block away from our East Pine Street home,
Before I chose to stop going at age seven, when we moved out to the peach ranch:
Gazing at a children's version of biblical stories in the basement classroom;
Abraham Clinton being able to turn around his eyeball at church camp;
And the cold baptismal drops sizzling as they hit the top of my head,
Standing on the steep cement steps at the shady rear of the church.
It was not until early college that I ever set my foot in a church again,
And then only because Roland drug me along in his quest for redemption.
Through the adult years I would interact with a variety of friends and preachers,
And would attend a smattering of services and such, but never felt the call to do more.

Lena and Shannon

Lena Frederick, the married girlfriend down in Ojai during the teaching years,
Once called me the least romantic person she had ever met,
And another moment, the least ambitious.
Shoulda-coulda-woulda might have stayed with her.
Or maybe with Shannon, if it had not been for her sociopath son.

Home to Mom

Then there was the passing driver, his eyes and smile twinkling,
At my 'Home to Mom' sign, hitchhiking back from Grand Canyon.

Frugal Roots

I was raised in a very old ranch house, with an oil stove and layers the only heat.
And a stove burner set at low, heats up Studio 101 plenty fine,
When layers and blankets fall short.
Frugal roots on both sides of the genetic divide.

Throw Away the Key

It may matter to you because you are still in the game: I am not, and never will be again.
They can lock me up and throw away the key, for all I care.
The guillotine is okay, too.
Didn't ask to be here, ain't prayin' to be stayin' … an oft-used quip.
If I knew I wasn't going to wake up tomorrow morning, I'd go to bed early … another regular.

Mrs. Hoight

"I did it!" I happily declared, as I looked up and saw Mrs. Hoight, my kindergarten teacher,
Looked at me, with the same look, I'm sure I did many years later, during my turns as teacher.

Mr. Przybyła

Looking down at the Nazi Swastika I had carved at the top of wooden desk,
Mr. Przybyła, my fifth grade teacher, asked "Why did you do that?
"I don't know," I answered, and truthfully, do not, still.

Free Phone

And the great state of Kaliforny practically threw a phone at me; free, my favorite four-letter f-word.

The Banyan Seed of Corruption

The early indications of criminality are akin to a Banyan seed cast nonchalantly by a breeze,
Or even a Tootsie Roll, covertly snatched by a young boy from a grocery store shelf,
And too hastily, too greedily, opened in the rear seat of the family station wagon.
The world only saved, at least for a bit, by a mother's ever-constant virtue,
A mumbled apology to the cashier, and plea that a father not be told.
Memo to Self: If you are going to be a thief, be smart about it.

Most Responsible Kid I Have Ever Seen

When we lived on East Pine Street in Hughson, California,
Something before we moved out to the Hatch Road ranch when I was age seven,
A neighbor, an elementary principal in nearby Empire, who had observed me playing alone in the yard,
Exclaimed to my parents, "That is the most responsible kid I have ever seen."
I know better, but it was perhaps true during the early years,
Before the world took me by the scruff,
And taught me better.

A Tale of Two Worlds

From the back seat of my taxi – while I was yabbering away on what topic you might easily presume –
He quite firmly, with a calm voice, said he would have to kill me, if I did not shut up.
He was of Middle Eastern descent; Saudi Arabian, is my recollection.
This was in Chico, California, in the mid to late Nineties.
Before September 11, 2001, Anno Domini.
Hey, no problem, bro, relax, put the box-cutter away.

The Forklift Driver

Although I have enjoyed so many things in this span of dreamtime,
All I ever really 'wanted' to do was be a forklift driver.
The spatial flowing of it, drew the farm boy.
On a forklift, in the field stations I in youth worked,
I was a fighter pilot, flying solo all about the asphalt jungles,
On which my iron horse and I, rallied about, putting order to daily chaos.
Such was my satisfaction, that I once even used vacation time at Creative Alternatives,
To work the peak of a walnut season at Ron Martella's huller on Tully Road in hometown Hughson.
Ten-hour days in California Great Central Valley's late summer often very warm weather.
Every moment absolutely, priceless, in the very-very right-here-right-now of it.
The hardest part was in those rare moments when it slowed down.
And even then, there was always something to do.

The Hanging Life

Hanging in coffee shops and book stores and funky bars has always been a thing.

The Medicine Bag

Have got quite the medicine bag to dip into whenever the mood arises. So much stuff available, and all but legal anymore; the anarchy of these modern times being what it is. I have done plenty of whatever I could get my hands on since going late-bloomer-beyond alcohol and marijuana in 1989, but am not an addictive personality, and can take-it-or-leave-it anything without a twinge. If I was to give into addiction, it would be to sugar, and I do not mean the sweet spot between the upper thighs. Have never messed with crystal meth or PCP or fentanyl, though I might dabble in buzz-level amounts if I found a trusted source. Have all kinds of alcohol at the ready in the home base, too, but with pre-diabetes a hovering reality, a few here and there beers or shots of anything 90-proof is generally the limit, but no day is over until it is over.

Enjoy starting off the occasional day with a micro-dose cocktail, coffee in the Studio 101 patio or Geerbucks, dancing on the keyboard writing and editing the babble, watching online the Planet of the Apes do its thing, and chatting with baristas and whoever wanders by. And then aqua chi, a nap or three, food, and Netflix. Toss in there some food shopping, the occasional medical check-up, a weekly visit with Mom and Sis, and the nutshell is complete. Straight or stoned, this retired life has become a quietly pleasant, minimalist routine. There is just nothing I have desperately got to do in this dreamtime anymore. And in retrospect, there never was. I have always just swung from vine to vine doing the best I can. In order to keep me on board, in order to keep me participating in this droning earthly game, wily imagination has enticed me, allowed me free reign, with an endless stream of philosophical and anecdotal thoughts, to stay in her fold. Don Miguel Ruiz's Mitote – the chaos of 1,000 voices all trying to talk at once in the mind – returns to tabula rasa when knowledge of the world, within and without, is stilled. Simply a matter of setting down the garden fruit plucked so long ago.

And Then There Was the Time …

Eighth grade homeroom teacher, Ruth Rollins, was reading aloud, as she did every day after lunch.
That day it was Robert Heinlein's Tunnel in the Sky, with a plot I cannot now even vaguely remember.
And I, in the front row right in front of her, was reading a copy I had found in the school library.
At first there seemed to a bit of irritation as she became aware of my early mischievousness,
but then, realizing I had become a reader, she half-smiled with that twinkle in her eyes.
Something for which, during this most magical dream, I have ever been grateful,
and years later was fortunate to be able to thank her at birthday party for her sister.

* * * *

I followed a dog across the fields of the small-town high school behind our house.
The old woman who owned the wandering canine called the sheriff.
All I recall is the front door opening to a sea of legs.

* * * *

I suddenly realized my mother could never make all the owies go away.

* * * *

I was meditatively wandering a budding almond orchard during a lunch break,
and suddenly, perception for the first time transformed into the indescribable state.

* * * *

I fell asleep while on walkabout in the nearby hills of La Grange, California,
and awoke inwardly asserting, "I've got it," to what can only be described as a presence.
Got what, it took years to discover, over and over and over again.

* * * *

I was hitchhiking around Europe for a few months,
and while staying with a family in South Wales in the United Kingdom,
I one night awoke with the thought that my father back in California needed to talk to me.
After tossing and turning for a bit, with no let-up on the recurring thought,
I finally got up, called collect, and sure enough, it was true.
Dad had been 'beaming' for me to call,
To see if it might work.

* * * *

Blane Franca, friend and boss, called me a machine compared to other co-workers.

* * * *

I was on an outing to a Southern California beach with my fifth-sixth grade class,
from the Oak Grove School in Ojai, where the second year of teaching was nearing its end.
I had never bodyboarded before, and was not at all prepared for the wave that used the board as a sail,
to quickly slam me headfirst into the smooth sand beneath the crashing turbulence,
and forever altered whatever direction life had thus-far offered.
It was precursor to all these many thoughts.

* * * *

Selena Mitchell wondered aloud what I might have been doing,
when this or that aphorism spontaneously bubbled into consciousness.
“Who knows?” was my tardy quip to that long-ago Chico dinner party moment.
“They just keep on coming and coming, and I diligently tag them,
with neither time nor place nor anecdote.”
Circa Y2K will have to do.

Random Babble

All this random babble has been scribed since leaving a teaching job in Ojai in 1989.
Apologies for all the repetitiveness, but it has been more a journal of whatever sprang into mind,
than any kind of cohesive narrative, or cohesive anything, for that or any other matter.
Basically, it all boils down to this fact: You are the indivisible, timeless mystery,
and for all practical and impractical purposes, you are on you own.
Rotsa ruck, best wishes, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Michael J. Holshouser: Life Resume

CONTACT

1112 Cedar Creek Drive, Unit 4
Modesto, CA 95355-5213
mjholshouser@gmail.com

The Stillness Before Time
http://thestillnessbeforetime.blogspot.com

Breadcrumbs: Life Resume
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction.html

EDUCATION

Cultural Language Acquisition Development Certificate
Humboldt State University, Arcata

Multiple Subject and Single Subject Social Studies Credentials
University of Pacific, Stockton

Bachelor of Science, Business Administration
California State University, Chico

Associate of Arts, Business
Modesto Junior College

TIMELINE

Turlock - Retired April 1, 2011

Aimless wandering and any general puttering that comes to mind in whatever time is left in the magical mystery tour for this aging sack of flesh and bones.

Santa Cruz – July 2023

Co-Host – Jasmine Garden Oasis Airbnb, Santa Cruz

Turlock - 2000 to 2011

Employee & Foster Care Training Coordinator and RFS Student Transportation –
Residential Care, Foster Family Agency & Reyn Franca School, Creative Alternatives, Turlock and Denair
RFS Coordinator – Reyn Franca School, Denair

FFA Coordinator – Foster Family Certification and Training, Turlock
Administrative Assistant – Creative Alternatives, Turlock –
Foster Parent and Employee Training, First Aid/CPR Instructor, Advertising, Interim Human Resources Coordinator, Transportation Coordinator, ITFC Program Coordinator, Notary Public, Graphic Arts, Grace Bishop Scholarship Chairman, Christmas Party and Silent Auction Chairman, Special Projects Coordinator
Instructional Aide – Reyn Franca School, Creative Alternatives, Denair
Child Care Worker – Residential Care Homes, Creative Alternatives, Turlock
Technical Support – Sandpiper Technologies, Manteca

Chico, Humboldt - 1990 to 1999

Express Coordinator, Machine Operator, Copy Consultant – Kinko's
Sales, Craft Fair Coordinator – Meraz & Associates
Barista – Starbucks
Security – Grass Valley World Music Festival - Maple Creek Presents
Taxi Driver, Dispatcher – Eagle Taxi
Sales – Christensen Designs, Manteca
Author, Publisher, Website Design – "The Stillness Before Time"
ATM Technician – Wells Fargo Armored Service Corporation
House Restoration – 1111 Oleander Avenue – Lee Hoffmann
Security – Chico World Music Festival - Maple Creek Presents
Security – Shakespeare in the Park - Maple Creek Presents
Clam Shucker, Dishwasher – Annual Bravo Opera Ball - Zephyrs
Auction Aid – Public Estate Auction – Mansfield Auctioneers
Operations, Teacher, Partner – Residential Care – Chico Hedway Programs
Sales, Ferry Harvest Farmers Market – Mountain Fruit Company
Social Security Administration Payee – Patrick Dauwalder
Sales, Stock, Custodial, Inventory – Sierra Stationers
K-12 Substitute Teacher – Butte and Tehama County Schools

Ojai - 1988 to 1990

Morning Bread Baker – Ranch House Restaurant
Housesitting/Caretaking – Various Ojai Homes
Fifth-Sixth Grade Teacher – Oak Grove School
Summer School Director, Bus Driver, Yearbook Advisor, Options Instructor,
Drama Lighting Hand – Oak Grove School
Waiter, Host – Franky's Restaurant, Ventura
Arts and Crafts, Trail Riding, Counselor – Gold Arrow Camp, Huntington Lake

Hughson, Turlock - 1983 to 1988

Fifth Grade Teacher – Hughson Elementary School District
Child Care Worker – Creative Alternatives, Turlock
Assistant Social Worker, Foster Home Program – Creative Alternatives
Photographer – Weddings, Special Events, Portraits – Self-employed
K-12 Substitute Teacher – Stanislaus County Schools

Forklift Operator – Martella Walnut Huller
Publisher, Sales, Layout – La Grange Rodeo Program
Animal Trail Naturalist – Old Oak Ranch, Columbia
Word Processing Instructor – Alpha Com
Editor, Columnist, Photographer, Sales, Layout – Hughson Chronicle
Fair & Horse Show Photographer – Stanislaus County Fair, Turlock
US Festival Photographer – Glen Helen Regional Park, San Bernardino
Children's Program, String Figures & Knot Tying – Strawberry Bluegrass Festival, Yosemite
Teaching Aide – Modesto Montessori School
Hired Hand – Roen Ranch Right Fork Cattle Company, Waterford

Los Gatos – 1982

Consultant – California Commission on Violence Prevention, San Jose
Photographer – Weddings, Special Events, Portraits – Self-employed
Sales – Chanticleer Children's Bookstore

Waterford - 1980 to 1982

K-12 Substitute Teacher – Stanislaus County Schools
Photographer – Weddings, Special Events, Portraits – Self-employed
Forklift Driver – Martella Walnut Huller, Hughson
Publisher, Sales, Layout – La Grange Rodeo Program
Home Reconstruction & Caretaking – Merritt Hulst

Hughson, Waterford - 1978 to 1980

Editor, Columnist, Photographer, Sales, Layout – Waterford News
Yearbook Advisor – Waterford Elementary School District
4-H Photography Instructor – Waterford 4-H Club
Sales – Combined Insurance Company, Merced County

Sacramento, Reno – 1977

Department Manager, Home Division – Weinstock's, Sacramento and Reno

College Years: Hughson, Chico, Alameda – 1972 to 1977

Industrial Specialist, Engineering Branch – Alameda Naval Air Rework Facility
Waiter, Busboy, Dishwasher – Sizzler Steakhouse, Alameda
Circle K President – California State University, Chico
Swimming Instructor, Lifeguard –Recreation Department, Ceres
Forklift Driver, Weigh Station Master, Sample Machine Operator, Bin Tagger –
Joan of Arc Field Station, Hughson

The Early Years – 1953 to 1972

Farm Hand – Holshouser & Son (Family Farm), Hughson
Key Club President, Vice President, Sergeant-at-Arms – Hughson Union High School
Senior Senator, Class of '72 – Hughson Union High School
Secretary, Hughson Chamber of Commerce – Hughson

SKILLS, HOBBIES, INTERESTS, ATTRIBUTES

Writing, problem solving, organizing, systems analysis, marketing, sales, human resource development, training, special events, bookkeeping, computer software, coding, copy machines, automatic teller machines, inventory control, form design, photography, drafting, housesitting, caretaking, general mechanics, bus driving, forklift driving, and other agriculture-related equipment handling.

String figures, knot tying, origami, paper planes, calligraphy, drawing, perceptual activities, military history and technology, trap and target shooting, archery, chess and other board, card, and dice gaming.

Walking, bicycling, swimming, racquetball, gym time, cross-country skiing, backpacking, spelunking, car camping, campfire design, sailing, paintball, four-wheeling, horseback riding, traveling, massage, yoga, macrobiotics, dancing, plants, reading, philosophy, channel surfing, aimless wandering, and general puttering.

Personable, articulate, disciplined, meticulous, punctual, eclectic generalist.

ADDITIONAL STUDIES

Learn to Sail in Four Days – J World Sailing Courses, San Francisco Bay
First Aid/CPR Instructor – American Red Cross, Stanislaus County
Notary Public – California, Stanislaus County
InDesign, Entourage, iPhoto, PageMaker, Photoshop, QuarkXPress, Eudora, Communicator, Palm Desktop, Graphic Converter, ScanWizard, iView MediaPro, PageMill – Creative Alternatives, Turlock
Michael Meade Mythology Workshop – Mosaic Multicultural Foundation, Community Church of Mill Valley
10-Day Vipassana Meditation Course – California Vipassana Center, North Fork
Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint), HTML Web Design – Humboldt State University, Arcata
Windows 98, Netscape, Internet Explorer, Regular and Color Copiers, and other related technologies – Kinko's, Chico
Automated Teller Machines (ATM's) – Wells Fargo Armored, Chico Area
Appleworks, Quicken – Chico Hedway Programs, Chico
Hunter Safety and Self-Defense Firearms Training – Safer Arms, Chico
Inventory Control – Sierra Stationers, Chico
Hand Drumming – California State University, Chico
Joel Kramer Yoga Workshop – Northern California
Macrobiotic Workshop – Macrobiotic Center, Harbin Hot Springs, Middletown

Tri-County Math Project – University of California, Santa Barbara
Bill Martin Language Workshop – California State University, San Jose
Right Side Brain Drawing – California State University, Long Beach
Great Books Leader Training – Junior Great Books, Santa Barbara
Direct Instruction – California State University, Stanislaus, Turlock
How Children Learn – Ottawa University Extension Class, Modesto

To Whom It May Concern

It is certainly a curious thing to have gone this mystical direction in life. Most definitely a road less traveled. As far as discussing it with others goes, I think, as with any specialty, any sphere – science, mathematics, music, sports, business, politics, et cetera ad infinitum – that we all tend to search out like minds, to focus on our interests and passions. Scientists with scientists, mathematicians with mathematicians, musicians with musicians, athletes with athletes, businessmen with businessmen, politicians with politicians, et cetera ad infinitum. Our little "lost" tribe of seers, being somewhat scattered about the globe, are not always easy to run across. You just never know who will be sitting next to you in some coffee shop, bar, or park bench.

Personally, I have always been generalist and chameleon enough, to enjoy chatting with whoever, about whatever comes up. There is great freedom in anonymity. Many people I know quite well, have very little if any clue, about what I have done, or what I have written. It has just never come up. I may probe and plant seeds, but do not worry whether or not they take root. Some minds are fertile; some are barren. It is just the way it is.

As far as staying connected with family, friends, and acquaintances goes, we each have to decide what is important to us, and it may be for some, that burning bridges and moving on alone, is only option they allow themselves. The high school class of my small rural town origin celebrated our 40th reunion a few years back, and those who came had a great time reconnecting and sharing their life journeys. Very few of them would ever be at all interested in my thoughts on things – many of them are true believers in one dogma or another – and I am okay with that. No point beating yourself over the head, over things you cannot change.

The big view of it is, that I am one of who knows how many awakened eyes in this magical mystery tour, as likely are you if you are reading this. Whether anyone else hears the call, is something over which none of us has any say. Nor does it really matter. We may point the way to a larger vision, but it is each, abiding in their own set of capacities and limitations, who must, to whatever degree, wander the pathless mystery very much alone. We are but ephemeral seed crystals, of our own devices, for consciousness to do with what it will.

Everything I have written since 1989, except for a couple notebooks that were lost, along with a few other oopsie moments on the computer, is my gift to the future, such as it is. It is up to you, and others I have befriended through the years, to pass it on, if you deem it to have merit. It has been an interesting pastime, to give so much of my time over to it: to think it, to scribble it, to transcribe and edit it, to throw it about like Johnny did apple seeds. There may be in the neighborhood of five or six thousand pages worth by the time I exit this center stage. And what happens to it is for time to tell. I leave it to you to decide.

So it goes, either way. I played my part, I said my piece, I had my fun.

M

P.S. For best viewing online, using the largest screen you have available to explore my little theme park, is suggested. Scrolling down and down on a phone screen is just not going to give you the same entrée.

P.P.S. Regarding the name Yaj Ekim ... It is just a reverse spelling of the first and middle names ... Michael Jay Holshouser ... Mike Jay ... Yaj Ekim.

P.P.P.S. Coincidently, make of it whatever you will, or will not, Yaj is an Indian boy's name meaning worshipper, sacrifice, another name for Shiva, a sage. And Ekim is a Turkish name for October meaning "sowing" (of seeds). All kinds of absurdity can be read into that by the many so-inclined – none of which was in mind when I came up with the idea to reverse the letters to my name. See P.P.S. for details.

P.P.P.P.S. Yes, I am Shiva. And so are You. No, I am not Shiva. And neither are you. Irony and paradox rule.

A Letter to Karen Hesli
Former Oak Grove School Director

Karen Hesli
c/o Oak Grove School
220 West Lomita Avenue
Ojai, CA 93023-2244

November 14, 2023

Hey, Karen,

A voice from the past.

People come and go in each other's lives, and sometimes when they flash into mind, you wonder what became of them. So, I thought I would offer you a little catch-up, since we crossed paths for a couple years in a meaningful way, and you still walking on the upside of daisies, more traceable than most.

The reason I am sending this, is that John Christianson – now married and dealing with a very debilitating dose of Lewy body dementia up in the Eureka zone – and I, have recently reconnected via phone every once and a while. Your name came up at some point of reminiscence, and he said you were on the school board. Looked you up on the Oak Grove website – the school definitely looks as if it has evolved nicely – and thought I would ramble for a bit down memory lane.

Have always remembered one of the last things you said toward the end of my two-year tenure at Oak Grove in the late 80's, was something to the effect – somewhat wistfully by this ear – that so many people had come and gone, and you were still there. Which, by my estimate, in retrospect, was a perfect fit. I cannot be sure how I was as a teacher – always did my best, but would, were it possible, certainly push a rewind button on more than a few of the memories so vague – but I always thought your dexterity as a light-handed, well-intentioned administrator was admirable.

For me, it turned out, that after just under forty years of trying to come up with something that captivated this rolling stone – so many things did, until they did not – every variety of mostly aphoristic thought started streaming into mind. And I have spent the thirty-plus spins around our little star since leaving Oak Grove, enjoying the process of morphing together a sizeable labyrinth of my-two-cents, autodidactic, philosophical babble. All of which can be accessed through a website and several social media arenas.

The Stillness Before Time
Reflections From a Fellow Sojourner
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com

A theme park, one fellow called it. Something no one in any sort of right mind will ever even begin to wade through for long. And it is all most definitely non-profit, because – having no interest in the soul-sucking absurdities that it would take to cultivate it marketable – I out-of-pocket throw it out there, Johnny-

Appleseed-town-crier fashion, for grassroots deliberation, no charge. Links to many other writings from across the world, across time, that have influenced my thinking in this quest – including Krishnamurti, of course – are also blogged. All titles can be accessed on the website command-and-control home page. Blogs are best viewed on a computer or tablet to easily access the sidebar menus. Click on "View web version" if using a smartphone.

Might have to dig deep for the Krishnamurti blog pages; they being early entries in the randomness of all things online. Mainly just links and a few quotes, so no big deal.

Of a Philosophical Nature: Jiddu Krishnamurti
https://ofaphilosophicalnature.blogspot.com/2021/11/jiddu-krishnamurti.html

Of a Philosophical Nature: Truth is a Pathless Land
https://ofaphilosophicalnature.blogspot.com/2015/02/truth-is-pathless-land-jiddu.html

Do not know if anyone realized – I certainly did not at the time – that I had suffered a life-changing head and neck injury while first-time boogie boarding, when my class joined Theresa's during their end-of-year campout at the beach near Carpinteria. The wave that caught the board and sailed me head and neck first into the sand – if it had been rocks, I might well have drowned – really tweaked my world. Stumbled to Lena's umbrella, and fell asleep (i.e., unconscious). Woke up somewhat dazed, and carried on, as has always been the farm-boy-trained nature. It likely contributed to the departure from Oak Grove. Probably why I left Lena, too. Who I might have in retrospect stayed with, had the domestic life called me.

The point being, curious as it is, that was when the aphoristic thoughts began bubbling into mind. At some juncture during that fog of time – before or after the injury, I am not sure – I made a comment about being so world-weary to Arthur Braverman, and he gave me a well-worn copy of Nisargadatta's "I Am That" – my first dip into Vedic-Hindu thinking. Self-medicating on psilocybin mushrooms, accessed through an old-woman friend of Lena's – my first late-bloomer experience with hallucinogens; it had been just alcohol and pot up until that; during off-teaching hours on weekends, of course – no doubt played a part as well.

Head injury, world-weariness, psychedelics – something of a perfect storm, so to speak. Threw the first batch of a couple hundred index cards away, when Lena said they sounded like Krishnamurti. But the thoughts kept bubbling into mind. And after a few months of heading the Oak Grove summer school program, and early morning bread-baking at the Ranch House Restaurant, I moved up to Chico for the next decade, and was on fire reading and writing and working, and so much more. What a time it was, it was. And the pile of small spiral-bound notebooks grew and grew, until I accessed a workplace computer, and began gradually shaping them digitally – into a relatively unknown work at this writing.

And probably for all future ones, as well, because I have never had any ambition, when it comes to making money and being in the limelight and trapsing about building a following. If Krishnamurti was a microphone, I am a keyboard, aided and abetted by word processing, and all that the online world offers. Both of us – and anyone else of similar ilk – playing our recordings over and over and over, watching the seemingly never-ending chatter issue forth. For me, it is first and foremost inhaling the process of writing. Of sculpting and editing every thought, every word, every comma. And then sharing it freely with whoever might be interested. All very spontaneous.

Given the laissez-faire atmosphere I was raised in, I was pretty much free to be self-actualized from the get-go. Had almost two years alone before my sister came along, and she never the rough-and-tumble sort.

Whether playing with Tonka trucks and toy soldiers and cowboy pistols in the dirt in a corner of the yard; driving a roaring tractor and disc back and forth for hours and hours through the peach orchard, having fun battling branches every tree threw at me; spending whole afternoons throwing dirt clods and playing tag with other farm boys at the Tully Road bridge and the canal falls just upstream; three years of sitting at a drafting table focused totally on precision in high school; putting together newsletters and flyers for various clubs in high school and college; running the weekly newspaper in Waterford, a small town near hometown Hughson; riding horses and gathering and branding cattle with cowboy friends; putting together programs for the La Grange Rodeo; roaming the grounds, camera in hand, as Stanislaus County Fair photographer; producing yearbooks for several schools, including Oak Grove; or long aimless-wandering strolls wherever I have lived – the casual, timeless enjoyment of process, has always been the motivating force in my rolodex of work and play experiences. Goals are really no more than punctuation points in the maze of process, and often, in my zen-ish-non-zenish reckoning, something of a let-down, if bestowed too much weight.

Krishnamurti got hijacked by Leadbeater and Besant and their true-believer following, into playing on a world stage. Meandering wherever, alone, anonymous, sitting in random coffee shops with notebooks and index cards and MacBooks – and someday joining the Dead Poets Society – has suited me just fine. And has kept me free to spout whatever comes to mind, whatever I please, without being trussed up in the politics of recognition, the dance of acquaintanceship. Free of the dogmatic, politically-correct groupthink, too often morphing into true-believer mania, that so often arises, when there are two or more. The axis of evil is nepotism and cronyism and favoritism, is how I often put it. The group mind, the tribal mind, that evolved in the jungles of long ago, has never been enticing to me as more than side-show, shake-my-head entertainment. Spent too much of this first-born existence alone, and have never not found it pleasant it in an agreeably self-sustaining way. Was using the term ‘social loner’ to describe myself, until a more eloquent coffee-shop acquaintance rephrased it ‘sociable loner’ at some post-Y2K point.

Modesto Junior College in the early 70’s, had introduced me to Sartre, Camus, Hesse, Watts, and Voltaire in a philosophy 101 class taught by a very old, very waxen-looking German fellow with a thick accent, named Markgraf – the only philosophy class I ever took. And Vonnegut, Bradbury, Huxley, Machiavelli, and Orwell in English 101 and 102 classes, both taught by cowboy-boot-wearing Russ Kelly. And, of course, all the other curriculums, that liberal arts era of education offered; many taught by some of the best teachers I ever had. Over-the-top heady stuff for a bright-but-clueless hick coming out of small-town America, circa last of Old School post-WW II.

But it was Krishnamurti who became the great influencer during the first post-college year in the corporate retail world of Weinstock’s in Sacramento and Reno. Untold hours of reading and long walks. Attended three Ojai gatherings in the late 70’s and early 80’s. Never sought to meet him, or get involved with the following in any way. As I wrote above, anything like that has always been too much of a three-ring for me. Reading a couple biographies was window enough to the nonsense Krishnamurti and his brother had to endure in the hands of the Theosophical Society. Just listened to his weekend talks, attended the videos during the weekdays, and only very vaguely recall going up to the library a time or three. Otherwise, coffee shops, window-shopping, and a Los Padres campsite somewhere near a river. And though I pushed on through the years to many other writings from across this dreamtime, the no-holds-barred-take-no-prisoners foundation to this very unplanned, very impromptu, very unsought existence, was, in great part, set in stoneless by Krishnamurti, and his pathless-path, follow-no-one, you-are-on-your-own-all-alone stance. At least, that is the way I heard him.

No doubt, the small-town rural upbringing by modest, intelligent, stoic, naturally virtuous, non-invasive parents, on a thirty-acre peach ranch in the California Central Valley, also played a major part. As pure a

relationship with nature, free of religious or political or any other dogma, that those modern times allowed. Was Huck Finn in the Mississippi canal across the road from our ranch house, and Mowgli in the jungle out back. Barefoot and free. Driving a tractor and grading peaches during the hot and dust and peach fuzz of summers by age seven, and playing tag with other farm boys in the canal by age nine. Our mothers never even looking out the window.

Add to that a slew of dogs and cats, a couple rats, dilapidated farm equipment littering the compound behind the house, buckets and bags of pesticides and weed killers out in the garage and dirt shed, a large pile of wooden props behind it, chess and a variety of board and card and dice games and three working channels of black and white aerial-fed television in the front living room, climbing the large walnut tree in the back yard, a tank house fort and a couple underground ones, a well-notched sparrow-hunting BB gun, me and my little dog Jerry racing through the orchard in a post-war Willys Jeep Batmobile, annual camping trips to Seacliff State Beach and Bass Lake, trolling for fish up in some lake in the dusk with my father and grandfather, disking and leveling the orchard, putting up and taking down levies, spraying weeds around the trees, irrigating through the night with my father with flash lights and shovels for the gopher hole leaks, mixing cement with a hoe in an old wheelbarrow for his artwork sculptures, barbecuing steaks and chicken and burgers with him in the late afternoon shade of the tank house, hauling fruit to the field station that would inspire me to become a forklift driver during the college years, mowing the lawn and weeds around the house, raking leaves and trimming ivy beds in the front and back yards, Fourth of July fireworks with Grandad Holshouser's sweetened ice tea and homemade ice cream in my step-grandmother's wonderland garden, playing tag for hours with cousins in the half-acre back yard of my mother's parents, years of water balloon battles throughout the high school during Hughson's annual Tractor Rodeos, swim team throughout the younger years at the local youth center, four years of high school football, two-page parts in junior and senior plays, junior and senior proms and the first kiss, snagging watermelons with friends on the way home from drive-in movies, a patchwork of geeky sorts tagged MOB (Madly Organized Bunch) playing charades and toilet-papering each other's homes, doing service projects all over town during the senior year as Key Club president, Hughson's Chamber of Commerce secretary as it worked to incorporate itself from town to city, tearfully burying a favorite dog shot by the postman because he had to deliver the mail in the roadside post box where the dog had learned to chase cars with savage intent, and bawling at age twelve on the front lawn, when I fully realized, a month after his leukemia-caused death – my first human death – that I would never see my best friend, Lyle, again.

Very Dandelion Wine.

Sending the resume to you after going back to school to get the teaching credential, was an it-popped-into-mind impulse – over to which, I have, path-of-least-resistance given over to, more than a fair portion of this existence. And when you called back after the fallow year of substituting for more experience and a slew of classroom management ideas, I let the Fates spin me to Oak Grove. By the time I got down to Ojai, I was not all that much into Krishnamurti, as I was into trying to find something that would hold the interest. Thought teaching might finally be it – my mother and her heritage included a number of educators – but alas, that notion died, too.

Before Oak Grove, after Oak Grove. It was a great gift to finally find something that called me, engaged me, and held me ever since. And to leave something behind for this dust ball of dreamtime, as well. My aphoristic journal-chronical-diary-memoir-bulletin-log-dossier-scrapbook-commentary-thesis-hobby contribution, to whatever future the mystery has in store, for we, and all our fellow earthlings. Though, for it to gain legs of its own in this insane asylum – this irony-and-paradox-laden théâtre absurde, our kind has through unnatural selection created – seems extremely unlikely. Especially given its esoteric nature, and its

being set in a lingua franca, that only a relatively minute percentage of the eight billion-plus two-leggeds could even begin to read, were they even interested.

Given our attachment to history and all its traditions, our kind is racing down an abyss-bound waxed slide towards a who-can-more-than-speculate dystopian endgame. Long lists of books and movies plumb every sort of possibility; few of them pretty. But our genomic strand and every other thread that manages to survive, will no doubt eek on as best they can, for as long as they can in the Darwin-esque future. What becomes of this offering is entirely up to the grass roots who read it, and I fully expect it will die on the vine, because imagination is in control of the helm, and all attempts to wrest awareness from its genetically-induced grip, are more than likely useless. Besides which, I have absolutely no interest in competing with the cacophony of all the who-knows-how-many talking heads, mystics at large, spouting similar grist-for-the-mill cuisine across the analog and digital, old-and-new-school realms. Philosophers wrangling with a universe absolutely indifferent to their struggle. All to a relatively small readership-slash-listenership; the regard for skepticism and critical thinking being what it is, has ever been, will ever be.

The sitting-alone-serenely-in-the-cave option, would have made much more sense.

I relish wordplay, but would certainly never lay claim to being great at it. And story-writing, forget it. Poetry, as well. Anecdotes and vignettes, maybe. And despite what Lena said, you can be sure that I do not consider my aphoristic silliness to be anything close to duplicating or mimicking Krishnamurti. I regard myself just another of countless philosophers – students of life who have nothing they would prefer doing than spending who know how many thousands of hours pondering anything and everything – that the human paradigm has spun across all time, in every geography. We are all walking the same stage in different universes, different perceptions, is how I have come to see it. All molded by very different mind-bodies, different cultures, different languages, different values, different draws of the genetic lottery. Overlapping observations and conclusions, no doubt – it is, after all, the same mystery, the same awareness, the same genetic monkey-mind predisposition, for all – but reflected upon in very different ways, different contexts, different frames of reference, different linguistic aptitudes, different motivations. And all no-doubt influenced by many others they happen across in their inquiries; no thinker has ever resided in a vacuum. Despite its mission statement to focus solely on Krishnamurti's considerable output, the KFA could easily have a special room, filled with the works of all the ponderers he has influenced.

And I believe it important to keep in mind an aphorism from Voltaire: A witty saying proves nothing. Krishnamurti impacted who knows how many millions of people, and I perhaps more than a relatively few handfuls in comparison. But ultimately, all the philosopher-mystics who have ever spoken or scribed even the great insights, have really changed nothing. The genetic synergy of the human paradigm is spinning out of control across this pale blue dot. Our kind is really no different than any cancer, any genomic strain able to circumvent its constraints. Malthus was not wrong; just postponed for a few centuries by perpetual revolutions in agriculture and industry and technology. Made possible in very large part by oil and electricity, since their launch at the turn of the last century; not even 150 years ago. And thus, we are hell-bent on consuming our mother's blood and breath in every way imaginable, and may well destroy all life on this spinning dust ball, if she does not manage to take us out first, or at least prune back the vanity and greed, the narcissism and hedonism, imbedded in our genes, to something less toxic.

But alas, no matter the outcome, Gaia will be, for the rest of time, a twisted-maimed-crippled version of what she was before imagination took the reins of her immaculate creation, and trampled and twisted the world's gene pool into a murky future. Which will be, of course, a very short-term ascendency in the lila, the divine play, of eternity. The natural selection that it took for us to reach this point in time – the genomic sequencing

that regulates our kind's every moment – cannot forever be usurped by the capricious, passionate whims of consciousness, of imagination, uniquely playing out in every unborn-undying eternal mind. The resumption of right-relationship with the rules of the game, is for the future to discern, in the ruins, the scar tissue, of a Darwinian garden undone.

But, that said, what thinker has ever known how his snowflake will roll down the mountain, in the whatever time our kind has left, before it is inevitably snuffed out in this garden percolated in extinction. I loosely subscribe to the Greek proverb: A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in. Most of the things I have created in these seven decades of dreamtime, are already in landfills and the ashes of burn piles around Hughson, Chico, Alameda, Reno, Waterford, Los Gatos, Ojai, and Turlock, so no-big-deal-so-it-goes. This editorial-tutorial, philosophical-mystical creation has been a pleasant pastime, and the gypsy restlessness has finally matured content, fostered in some part by a Krishnamurti comment that struck and stuck somewhere along the timeline: Do what amuses you.

Of late, a new discovery, Ikkyū, Japanese zen poet, has become kindred-spirit cuisine.

Vaguely recall you telling me, that what made the resume stand out way back when, was the last entry in the 'interests' section: aimless wandering and general puttering. Whatever strength, whatever utility, whatever futility, my way too many words have – somewhere in the neighborhood of five thousand-plus pages at this writing – is because of such a varied wisdom-is-the-distillation-of-experience existence. A nomadic, all-rounder, generalist, chameleon, look-under-any-rock, wander-all-camps, no-direction-known, the-dark-side-ain't-dark-to-me, frame of reference, that flips at ease through many lenses. It has indeed been a remarkably serendipitous walkabout. Somehow, there was always another vine as I haphazardly swung this way and that through the jungle. Had I been told how this dreamy existence would turn out back in the younger daze, I would have no doubt ha-ha-yeah-right laughed.

Here is how ye old many-lifetimes-in-one-lifetime resume stands as the endgame kaleidoscopes towards the Reaper. It can be accessed via Contact Michael on the website home page.

Michael J. Holshouser: Life Resume
https://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction.html

Anywho, that be enough for now. This memory lane babble-on has turned out far longer than it started – kept adding things, fun putting it together, thank you – and is not intended as anything more than a sharing of what became of me after leaving Oak Grove. Hopefully, not too much of a chore to get through; the rambling, probably way-too-dark writing style being what it is. There was a couple-month, back-and-forth inner debate, whether to even slip it to the postman. And certainly, no need to reply unless it calls you. And-and, an FYI, that I shall probably post it in the Life Resume, Sketches of the Once Upon a Time, and Conversations blogs, where it will likely go unread by at least as many as eight billion-plus-plus people, not counting their progeny.

What is the future going to do with all those cadavers? I wonder.

You look somewhat blissful in the website pic. I think Oak Grove really has been a tolerably good destiny for you. No doubt many have been greatly enriched by your serene, gentle, clear-thinking, heartfelt best-wishes-to-all presence. Hope all is well enough for you, and Oak Grove, as our brief window in this grand mystery, gradually comes to a close. Will have made it seventy years as of the 14th of November, and this

getting old is definitely getting old. The time of consequences I calls it, wherein I often-unsuccessfully try to keep my creaky old man whining to myself.

Thank you for the part you played in it.

Ciao, ciao, best wishes,

M

P.S.

Current issue, and a couple other recent titles:

Breadcrumbs 2023 & Beyond
Bits and Pieces From a Dream of Time
https://breadcrumbs2023.blogspot.com/

Michael's Rabbit Hole
A Selection of Breadcrumbs & Other Aphorisms
https://michaelsrabbithole.blogspot.com/

The Call of the Eternal
A Conversation With My Self
https://thecalloftheeternal.blogspot.com/

P.P.S. Five excerpts from another gradually unfolding never-to-be-finished short work:

Sketches of the Once Upon a Time
A Few Epiphanies and Other Hallmark Moments
https://sketchesoftheonceuponatime.blogspot.com/

The Entrée into Manhood

My introduction to manhood began at age seven, when I first began driving the very well-worn Ferguson tractor, the spine of our thirty-acre peach ranch, where I worked alongside my father and grandfather; both mild, unassuming, Depression-steeled, hard-working men. My father said, in his straight-forward manner, "You're going to hurt yourself, and the best thing I've found to do, is to chew off the loose flesh, suck the blood until it stops, and then get back on the tractor."

The Epiphany Voice

The Hughson Union High School Awards Ceremony for the Class of 1972,
was held out on the old football field a few days before graduation.
I was called up seven times for awards of recognition and small scholarships.
Looking out at my applauding classmates as I walked down the steps of the small stage,
the epiphany voice clearly stated, in its forthright way: "Surely, there must be more to life than this."

Commentaries on Living

Sometime during my years at Modesto Junior College, while in the library walking through the stacks,
three small hardback, pastel-colored books leaped into the awareness and drew me like a magnet.
They were the "Commentaries on Living" by Jiddu Krishnamurti, an Indian philosopher.
Checked out the first one, and though it seemed worth reading, it made me sluggish.
So, I fairly soon returned it, and a week later nonchalantly pilfered all three.
It would not be until I had entered the working world a few years later,
that I was finally able to read them without drifting off into drowse mode.
It was the beginning of a lifetime of quixotic exploration, both inner and outer.
Finally, ten or twenty or whatever years later, in a twinge of rarely felt compunction,
I bought paperback versions, and dropped all three into the MJC sidewalk book return box.
Rest assured, that it was a move bemoaned many times since.
Wondering if they are still there …

Dean Evans

One early morning sunrise, soon after arriving in Chico after leaving Oak Grove School 1990-ish, I was sitting at a small table outside the Upper Crust coffee shop in the downtown. It was block away from California State University, Chico, my alma mater as a business major back in the 70's. There was another fellow – tall, lean, long-haired and bearded, deep-voiced, about my age, could have passed for a white Jesus in some movie – sitting on the other side of the doorway. We began chatting at some point – instantly friends for life – and it proved to be a defining moment in this philosophical walkabout. Dean Evans was a high-wire electrician and autodidactic artist, who took to my writings, and ended up being a key catalyst in their gradual journey from scribblings in notebooks, to the digital format that current times allow. Their first entrée into the public sphere was in his two downtown coffee shop art shows. Dean taped several aphorisms, printed up on white typewriter paper, between his paintings. That led to someone connecting me to a local book agent, who was the one who suggested I select the 250-ish aphorisms from the 300 pages that I had digitalized by that point, that would become the first book, and years later, title to The Stillness Before Time website. The book never took off as anything marketable – it was too esoteric for the book agent, as well as any other publishers I have ever contacted – but Dean Evans was instrumental in everything that happened since. His "You are perfect. Pure gold. Brighter than the sun" is part of the flagship book's preface, and "It's a god-eat-god world" forwards the second book, The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim. He and I, along with his wife, Linda, and children, Jasper and Rafael, and their community of friends, had many memorable adventures together in the Chico decade, and a number of visits through the post-Chico years thereafter.

From a Back-And-Forth with Len Howard

Along with a moderate ABC education in small rural town Hughson, California, you can also thank Roland Russell for nonchalantly suggesting in early already mind-shaking college: “Mike, why don’t you write poetry; it’s kind of fun.” There was also a brief stint running the Waterford News early out of college, where I quickly learned to always have pen and paper and camera at hand as I wandered through the small-town metropolis and surrounding countryside searching for newsworthy fare. As for any brilliance, as you call it, it seems to be more about being something of a receiving unit, with the discipline to write down most the things that come to mind, along with a certain knack for word association, coupled nicely with an adroitness with word processing, greatly aided by the spellcheck and thesaurus functions. As to whether what I have written will ever be well known, or make any real difference in the future of humankind, or the welfare of the planet and all our fellow earthlings, I have many doubts and no time machine. A little too late to make the difference I would be seeking, anyway. I am afraid we are a little too whacked out at this stage of the game to turn the Titanic a less toxic direction. So, I have come to consider it an enjoyable diversion that fills some of the existential reverie, and am content that a few people in the here and there like yourself find it interesting.

And something I wrote and framed for my mother’s 94th birthday in early September:

My Mother

If I have not said or implied it elsewhere,
In this thirty-years-plus philosophical walkabout,
It should well be counted a good destiny’s good fortune,
To have been given a mother, such as I have had.
So calm, so rational, so intelligent, so good.
A modest, humble-to-the roots woman,
Of whom Buddha would be in awe.
Beverly Jean Kurtz-Holshouser,
Is her name, born September 4, 1929.
In this worldly mind’s quantum dreamtime,
She, such an unfathomable part, has performed.
She is the source, the seed, the blessing,
For this scribe’s life work and play.

Her loving son, Michael Jay

P.P.P.S.

And for any of your high school readers interested in an Old School booklist that might help them prepare for the unfolding debacle.

A Short List of Books for the Up and Coming
Some Written Works That May Help Get the Young up to Speed
https://listofbooksfortheupandcoming.blogspot.com/

Though, according to those who do such research, Darwin did not write it, he is credited with the well-worn meme – a maxim, a truism, a proverb, of which anyone bent on survival for themselves and their progeny, should be mindful: It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.

And change is coming. You and I have been very fortunate – always say anymore that the masses of our boomer generation have lived through the best of times, probably the apex, as far as my take on human history goes – but those kids out on the playground are in the line of fire in the times I see coming at them. It took 3.8 billion years for our kind to hit its first billion, and only another 200-ish to breed seven billion more. Which leaves me more than a little sure there is no happy ending to this Shakespearian you-can-take-the-monkey-out-of-the-jungle-but-you-can't take-the-jungle-out-of-the-monkey template. This "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." And in my thinking, depressing as it is to those idealistically wishing-hoping-praying for a better-kinder world, their education should, at least in part, prepare them for that. Darwin and Malthus 101, so to speak.

And what of those who do not adapt to the coming change? Well, as always, they shall be fodder in one stew or another.

Kurt Vonnegut's Tralfamadorian proverb – So it goes – comes to mind.

Lots of other interesting stuff, as well, in the blog with the Krishnamurti posts mentioned above. For them who have inquiring be-ready-for-anything minds.

Of a Philosophical Nature
http://ofaphilosophicalnature.blogspot.com/

P.P.P.P.S.

Another quick anecdote, that Doug Honeyman – who I had spent some time with while in Ojai, and was well-versed in Krishnamurti, and likely many other notable works – early on put me in my place, when he dropped by in up in Chico on a journey north sometime in the mid-90's. He said of the early writings that I shared with him, "Nice words, but they don't do anything for me."

Ouch, but oh well.

P.P.P.P.P.S.

FYI that I still have that ivory-handle wooden letter-opener you gave me for taking care of Ernie when you and Jeff took off traveling for a week or so. I think during a Krishnamurti gathering, but might have been a vacation week. And whether in year one or year two, the memory is too vague. Definitely a great dog; easy to hang with. Like being back in the ranch daze with all the dogs we had through the years. Several of them victims to the relatively busy rural Hatch Road, because none were ever leashed or chained. Actually, my mother did chain one puppy we had gotten from a litter of a neighbor's fiercely-raging mother who was chained her whole life, and Rennie broke his neck in panic. But all the rest who drifted through, and were offered a food bowl, were given a freedom every dog deserves. And got to sleep all alone rain or shine in the

oily dirt-floor shed, to boot. And do not get sick or injured in our austere poor-white-farmer reality, because any visit to the veterinarian for more than shots or neutering, will be your last.

Let it be noted that Ernie lived a blessed existence.

But, I digress, as is my babble-on nature.

P.P.P.P.P.P.S. A few ditties from Breadcrumbs 2023 & Beyond to give you a taste of my banter:

Space and time are illusions, to which there is no direction.
There is no forward, no backward, no right nor left, no up nor down,
Nor any other bearing that imagination might in sensory perception envision.
The quantum dream is always, right here, right now, kaleidoscoping, no direction known.
And You are the centerstage, You are the awareness, You are the witness,
To the ineffable mystery playing out the given sentience.
All that is, all that is not, every moment.

* * * *

The body is always in the present moment.
Awareness is always in the present moment.
Only imagination wanders space and time.
Only imagination creates space and time.
Only imagination imagines itself alive.
Only imagination imagines itself real.
Only imagination imagines its Self.
Only imagination imagines totality.
Only imagination imagines nothing.

* * * *

Science is only is what it is, because of all the technologies,
That awareness, through imagination, has created to measure the cosmic illusion.
The dreamtime, that the electromagnetic spectrum – the quantum stardust, the divine dance, the Shiva –
Has spun into sentience upon this pale blue dot, is a sentience capable of exploring its mystery.
As to the question – whether it is intelligent design or naturally-selected happenstance –
Is it really, worth, all the absurdity, all the horror, our kind every moment inflicts,
Upon one another, all our fellow earthlings, and this whirling ball of dust?
We are all the same mystery, come unto the dream of existence;
What narcissism to give it more narrative than that.

* * * *

You are older than the stars, younger than the moment.
Right here, right now, this very, one-and-only, unborn-undying, timeless, ineffable instant.
Eternity … Bam!

* * * *

Awareness is the one and only You, the everything within all,
And it has no attachment to any shape, to any existence, whatsoever.
Its indivisible omnipresence-omniscience-omnipotence permeates all totality.
It is the unborn-undying, imbuing all dimensions, all illusions, cultivated by sentience.
If you are to realize the truth of that which eternity is, it must include everything, including You.
There is no need for deities, no need for souls, no need for angels, no need for saints, no need for demons,
No need for belief, no need for scripture, no need for dogma, no need for priests, no need for idols,
No need for worship, no need for prayer, no need for superstition, no need for cathedrals,
No need for heavenly ecstasies, no need for purgatories, no need for infernos.
Awareness is witness to all, and You, a sparkle of that eternal now.
All You need do, is be the solitary witness You ever are,
Without the self-imagery chained to form.
Be the ever-present moment.
Be the awareness.
Be the ineffable mystery.
Be the flawless sentience of eternity.
Be the indelible Self of all selves, of all creation.

* * * *

You are already samadhi, ecstasy, bliss.
All you need do, is be still enough to discern it.
We are all that which is called God by many names.
Each of us exploring our own exclusive matrix of creation.
And why do you need to believe in anything concocted by mind?
Is not just being, enough, without all the nonsense born of imagination?
The infinite ocean is an infinity of drops; how could all this be, any other way?
Without the endless splintering, there would be no existence, there would be no witness.
And it is You, who must endure it all, with all your spirit, very much alone, a light unto your Self.

A Letter to Arthur Braverman
Former Oak Grove School Teacher

Arthur Braverman
45 Taormina Lane
Ojai, CA 93023-3627

January 3, 2007

Arthur,

When you gave me Nisargadatta's I Am That in my world-weary state at Oak Grove in the late 80's, it was a crystal seed that precipitated a wild ride in the 90's. Lots of adventures, and an outpouring of thoughts that still have their moments. Enclosed is a short work that came together for a few publishing inquires that never materialized, but is meanwhile a nice once-and-awhile give-away to people open to such things. In retrospect, I sometimes joke that it should have been called The Silliness of Time, but the more serious-sounding title beat it to the punch.

Your name popped in my head a few weeks ago, and when I googled, lo and behold, you've been busy. Will be looking forward to seeing what you've put together in your most recent work when I get the incoming Amazon order. I still recall all the time you spent sitting in the Pavillion and up on the hill. Am afraid I'm still not much good at anything so disciplined, but once and awhile I give it a lax shot. Went to one of those 10-day Vipassana retreats in the Yosemite area a few years back. Enjoyed it quite a bit, but I suppose you could call me zazen-challenged as far as being regular in the day-to-day goes.

Anywho, thanks for being one of the many catalysts in my little life journey. Had read all sorts of Taoist, Buddhist, and a variety of other philosophers up until that point, but for some unknown reason hadn't touched on the Bhagavad Gita and other Hindu writings. The next few years were a real avalanche up in Chico, where I spent the 90's in a variety of jobs and living situations. Lots of coffee, walkabouts, and who knows how many notebooks full of scribbling. Anthropological field notes, I sometimes call them. Over 2400 pages transcribed, so far. It does get old at times, and I don't consider myself that great a writer, but the random enjoyment of stream of consciousness aphoristic wordplay, coupled with the discipline of running a newspaper pre-Oak Grove, keeps pen and paper at the ready. And the thoughts keep rolling out, so much the same, yet each so different in its own little way.

Moved back to the original geography in the Modesto area in Y2K, where I work a bureaucratic job for a local nonprofit, spend time with the parents, and wander relatively anonymous about the sundry. Not sure I'm really any less world-weary and bemused at times, this manifest realm is not always easy on mind, but so it goes.

Hope this finds you and Hiroko both well.

Thanks again, M

An Email to Professor John McWhorter
Senior Fellow at Columbia University

John McWhorter
Columbia University
319 Hamilton Hall, Mail Code: 2810, United States

January 2, 2023

Dr. McWhorter,

Picked up five Great Courses on language, four of them yours, Seth Lerer the fifth; each series with its own slot on a five-disk DVD player. Very enlightening, and well beyond my pale. Am dumbfounded by how little I know about how this mind babbles through its daze.

Without intending it – did not start playing with words until early college when a good friend, Roland, offhandedly said, "Mike, why don't you write poetry; it's kind of fun." – I have, in work and play, done quite a bit of writing in this existence. Am sending a link to my life work, my for-all-practical-purposes-unknown contribution to the human paradigm, on the off chance that it might be of use in yours or another's linguistic research.

The Stillness Before Time
Reflections From a Fellow Sojourner
Website: https://thestillnessbeforetime.com
Blog: https://thestillnessbeforetime.blogspot.com
PDF: https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thestillnessbeforetime.pdf

An esoteric work in an exoteric language. All very stream of consciousness; as 'camera back' as this mind allows.

My linguistic roots:

Raised in Hughson, Central Valley, California (A small rural town southeast of Modesto)
Firstborn, with one sister, two years younger
Mother, of German descent via Pennsylvania-Ohio-Kansas
Father, of German descent via North Carolina and North Texas (post-Civil War)
Both sides with pre-Revolutionary roots
Both sides largely farmers, preachers, and teachers; content with their lot
Parents raised with little sense of German heritage
Parents raised with little involvement with Christian heritage
Father moved from Texas to California at age two, just before Dust Bowl and Great Depression
Mother, born in Southern California; moved to Modesto in early years of Great Depression
Mother, one of three daughters of a college science professor and kindergarten teacher
Father, the only child of a farmer and bi-polar mother, attended Modesto Junior College

Linguistic imprint likely mostly from mother, UC Berkeley graduate and kindergarten teacher
Was driving a tractor and grading peaches during harvest by age seven
Greatly influenced by fifties/sixties black and white television
Vaguely remember phonics flash cards at the dinner table
Mother had a small collection of classical records
A transistor radio showed sometime in high school; we listened to it while grading peaches
SRA Reading Laboratory in seventh grade; some of us raced each other, we were so hungry
Plebeian education; most male teachers in high school were probably coaches at some point
About one hundred students per class level, probably at least a quarter farm kids
English classes in high school – all classes, actually – are but the vaguest of memories
Was the top boy GPA-wise in my graduating class, behind seven girls
Business Major at Modesto Junior College and CSU, Chico, seemed like a practical choice
Teaching credential at University of Pacific in Stockton ten years later
Never had to write more than a ten-page paper and blue books until attending UOP
And in that four-class summer program, I used the same classroom management paper for all
Autodidactic gistmeister in a loosely-scholarly way; Joe Everyman one woman labeled me
Reasonably adept with technologies as they evolved from rotary phone to gizmos galore
Have never used Alexa; the keyboard is the instrument of choice, most often in coffee shops
Praise the gods for word processing with its spelling and grammar checkers, and thesaurus

College was the game-changer. Naive small town farm boy meets Sartre and Vonnegut. Bam!

A Short List of Books for the Up and Coming
Some Written Works That May Help Get the Young up to Speed
https://listofbooksfortheupandcoming.blogspot.com/

Breadcrumbs: Life Resume
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction.html

Sketches of the Once Upon a Time
A Few Epiphanies and Other Hallmark Moments
https://sketchesoftheonceuponatime.blogspot.com/

Breadcrumbs: Photo Gallery
https://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction_50.html

Ancestry.com graphics are attached.

Mowgli in the forest out the back door,
Huck Finn in the Mississippi across the road,
Sisyphus daily pushing the boulder up the mountain,
Johnny Appleseed casting his ruminations across the world,
Sparrowhawk pursuing the shadow across the depths,
Phaedrus journeying down the asphalt pathways,
Paladin have-gun-will-traveling down the trails,
The Joyful Curmudgeon irreverently amused,
Jester Amok unleashing definitive cuisine,
Muad'Dib piercing the spice's secrets,

Bond sipping the shaken-not-stirred,
Joe Everyman wandering all camps,
And Peter Pan in the essence of all.

I hope my not-so-little online scrapbook will not be too intrusive. Thank you for so eloquently sharing your passion.

Happy 2023, hopefully.

Regards,

M

P.S.

Alas that all of the early poetry/prose and journals now reside in landfills in various parts of California, due to this gypsy's impulsive proclivity for lightening the load. And all this current fare will likely at best suffer a similar obscurity in one Dead Poet Society catalog or another. Assuming, of course, the human paradigm manages to survive itself more than a little longer.

A List of Injuries and Strains

1960's and 70's – Tractor driving: lower back, left arm and shoulder; heavy lifting and moving.

1957-ish – Golf club backswing to forehead, and monkey bar fall causing classmate's tooth to cut into top of head.

1967 through 1972 – Broke left eardrum three times, resulting in skin graft to eardrum. This, coupled with driving tractor, forklifts, vehicles with open windows, and sitting too close to a few concert and nightclub speakers, worked together to cause loss of high range sounds.

1969 through 1972 – High school physical education: running, jumping, throwing, wrestling, and other boy stuff. Two lower front teeth got root-canals after a collision in a rough dodge ball-like game in a freshman physical education class. First hemorrhoids started because of lack of fiber in diet and the resulting constipation.

1969 through 1975 – High school and Sunday afternoon football; some broken knuckles and a jammed finger joint; two major memories during frosh-soph years in football practice of a block that caused a pop in lower back, and a tackle that caused severe pain to left collarbone.

1973 to 1977 – Day packs full of college textbooks.

1973 to present – Backpacking, car camping, hitchhiking with a heavy backpack in Europe.

1973 to present – Coffee, alcohol, marijuana.

1973 through 1985 – Forklifting at Joan of Arc field station and Martella's Walnut Huller.

1978 to present – Transient working life in a variety of geographies.

1978 – Heavy lifting and moving at Weinstock's.

1975 through 1980 – Two or three right hooks to left jaw.

1980 – Peed blood after prepping on cold day for calf-tying event at La Grange Rodeo.

1980's to present – Two or three bicycle crashes.

1980's – Carrying photography equipment for Waterford News, weddings, special events.

1981 – Motorcycle slide on asphalt on left side in light clothing.

1985 to present – Graveyard shifts and sleep deprivation: Creative Alternatives, bread-baking, Kinko's, taxi driving.

1886 – Bicycle strain on left knee.

1989 – Head and neck injury caused by wave slam into sand.

1989 to present – Gun shooting recoils and archery pulls.

1989 – Falling onto feet while tying down rack on VW van.

1989 to present – Hallucinogens and other drugs including psilocybin mushrooms, LSD, nitrous oxide, opioids, cocaine, hashish, peyote, black tar.

1990's – Heavy lifting and moving at Sierra Stationers and Kinko's.

1998 – Carpal tunnel syndrome disability from Kinko's.

1999 to present – Bad posture in computer use.

2000's – Heavy lifting and moving at Creative Alternatives.

2000 to present – A couple mild concussions after passing out tightening upper back and neck.

2008-ish – Twice hit in left eye by racquetballs, the second time causing temporary blurriness for several days.

2013-ish – Sidewalk curb slip onto left knee.

2014-ish – Rolling fall down Marriott Hotel marble stairs.

2016 – Diving concussion at summer swim party.

2016 – Trigger finger, left middle finger, one cortisone shot in early 2017, operated on in June 2018.

2017 – Right shoulder nerve damage by rolling fall over shouldered fold-up chair.

2018 – Right eardrum perforated twice from excessive pressure from chewing too much gum resulted in mild tinnitus.

2020 – Failed carpal tunnel operation on right hand, thumb and two fingers totally numb. Carpal tunnel also getting more challenging in left hand.

2021 – Spinal stenosis in upper back and neck.

2022 – Swollen hands, arthritis, and several trigger fingers.

2023 – Dislocated left shoulder doing leg lifts on stationary machine at gym.

2024 – Tweaked left knee doing a squat without warming up.

Life, it'll kill ya.

My Back Pages

By Michael Holshouser

A personal preface to Mark Bava's essay – My Back Pages – about growing up as farm boys in the small rural town of Hughson during the 50's and 60's written for the 2007 Centennial:

I was born and raised in the small rural community of Hughson, California, working my way from kindergarten through high school with a little over a hundred peers at all four school sites: Hughson Elementary, Lebright Middle School, Emily J. Ross Junior High, and Hughson Union High School. For the first seven years of my life, our family of four (Horace, Beverly, and a sister, Ann, a little less than two years younger) lived on what was then a cul-de-sac on the east end of Pine Street. When my widowed grandfather, Horace Senior, married Martha Sinclair in 1960 and moved to her place, we moved to the thirty-acre family peach ranch on Hatch Road.

Suddenly, I was a farm boy living in an old wooden ranch house a mile northwest of town, and life changed dramatically. Within a year I was driving an old gray and battered Ferguson TE20 tractor, spring-toothing and putting up and taking down levies; staying up all night irrigating opening and closing gates, listening the water trickle toward the ends of checks with my father; hoeing weeds and pulling suckers off walnut trees interplanted between the peach trees; grading peaches during harvest, and picking up props at day's end; walking rain or shine with my sister to the bus stop at Hatch and Mountain View a quarter mile away; watching three channels of black and white television reruns in the front living room; digging underground tunnel hideaways covered with plywood; shooting birds in the bushes and fish in the canal with a BB gun; climbing trees and frolicking with dogs and cats; exploring an aluminum corrugated shed filled with tools and whatever; wandering the surrounding countryside planted with peaches, walnuts, almonds, and grapes; converting the second floor of the tank house into a fully-stocked-with-dirt-clods fortress keep; driving a Willy's post-World War II civilian jeep on a winding and dusty orchard-wide racetrack with my little dog, Jerry, sitting in the passenger seat; sobbing my eyes out on a hot day digging a shallow grave in the roadside orchard, burying Macho, who had finally chased one too many trucks on the busy Hatch Road; carrying out pitched dirt clod sorties with other farm boys, and playing rousing games of tag with them all summer at the Tully Road bridge, or the just-upstream falls between Tully and Seventh, in the Ceres Main Canal that was conveniently placed just across the road where I lived. It was a Mississippi out the front door, and a jungle out the back one. A blend of Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn and Rudyard Kipling's Mowgli, without a Pap Finn or Shere Khan.

Breadcrumbs: Life Resume
http://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction.html

Breadcrumbs: Photo Gallery
https://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction_50.html

Ferguson Tractor, Old Commercial
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELQgEa_JXJQ

Willys Jeep Commercial
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7Sle8X4EZM

And the thing to realize about all the physicality of those younger years, is that all the pain and bother – all the hot and cold, all the choking dust driving the tractor, all the gnats and itchy peach fuzz grading peaches, all the splinters picking up props, all the cuts and scratches and tears and bruises and crunches and burns handling equipment, and all the tedious long hours of all of the above – is that the discipline to finish a task, the capacity to endure suffering, the ability to one-step-after-another abide a mundane pace, as well as the recognition of the intrinsic relationship with nature, have all played a huge underlying role in the life lived since. Gumption, grit, resilience, stamina, ingenuity, dependability, steadfastness, critical thinking, problem-solving, and can-do-it-will-do-it attitude, are concepts that ring true in this mind. And are significant factors in the evolution of the frame of reference that has sculpted the philosophical-mystical writings that have poured out since 1989.

My Back Pages

By Mark Bava

Fellow Hughson Union High School Class of ’72 alumni, Mark Bava, who also lived on Pine Street, and was also a son of a local farmer, caught Ray Bradbury’s “Dandelion Wine” flavor of it all in an essay he wrote for the Hughson Centennial in 2007.

My Back Pages
https://markbava.blogspot.com/2006/07/writings.html

Mark’s Blog
https://www.blogger.com/profile/04781808645805571682

Dandelion Wine
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dandelion_Wine

Hughson Union High School Class of '72
https://www.facebook.com/Hughson-Union-High-School-Class-of-72-301790023189950/

Hughson Historical Society
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hughson-Historical-Society/169357353116469

Hughson Union High School
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hughson_Union_High_School

Hughson, California
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hughson,_California

Stanislaus County, California
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanislaus_County,_California

California
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California

Mark’s article:

"The boys were chasing the city truck
spraying DDT
It kept the mosquitoes down ...
That stuff won't hurt 'em none
I heard the neighbor lady say …"

James McMurtry
from the song "12 O'clock Whistle"

In the central valley town of Hughson, California, canal swimming was a recognized talent. One could almost become hailed in comparable stature to surfing champions on the coast for their prowess in the water. And just as surfers wore nicknames such as Duke, Woody, or Steamboat, we had ace swimmers with names like Frog, who could stay underwater at length, and were rumored to have performed feats that made local legend such as diving from high bridges, or shooting the most gnarly and dangerous waterfalls. To keep the flow of the water controlled over the downhill grade of the terrain, these waterfalls, or "drops," were built at various stages along the large cement irrigation canals that crisscrossed their way through Central California from upland reservoirs, bringing precious water to the valley farm lands below. The most popular falls and bridges also had their nicknames, like Double Drop, The M, or Russell's, named after the family who lived nearby. These favorite spots would often be magically crowded with guys drinking beer and showing off as girls in bikinis watched on. And just as the surfers cruised the coast to check the waves and action in their favorite bays, we would cruise to see who and what was going on at our favorite swimming spots. Some of the waterfalls were larger than others, and most were forceful enough to drown an expert swimmer unless one knew the currents well. Despite the fact that a number of people who accidently fell in or drove their cars in were drowned every year, we grew up swimming in these canals and prided ourselves in our skill to navigate the rushing waters. But even for us, there were some falls with the fury of Niagara that remained unconquered.

Playing tag was the main pastime, with rules and boundaries conceived in some organic fashion within the unique parameters of a large cement canal, rushing waterfalls, canal banks, and catwalks. Aside from tag, another reckless sport was "shooting the falls," which was daring to see who could go over the falls either head or feet first, or on inner tubes or some other random floating object.

Years later at a Hughson class reunion, a suggestion that some of us go swimming in the canal for nostalgia sake was met incredulously with the fact that no one swims in these canals any longer because it is now recognized that pollutants and pesticides infest these waters, not to mention the liability issues that come into play in today's lawsuit-happy world. It's another bygone era. We took chances then, and no one was sued when kids got seriously injured trying to water ski behind cars or dive off telephone poles into the canal. As far as the pesticides, in the town of Hughson, California, as in the Texas hometown of songwriter James McMurty, on blistering hot summer days we would peddle our bikes behind a cool mist of DDT coming from the back of the "Mosquito Man's" truck whenever he came to town spraying to keep the local mosquito population down. Back then, DDT was recognized as some kind of miracle chemical that was even sprayed on immigrants arriving at Ellis Island to ensure that they didn't bring foreign germs with them into our shining new country. Which was equivalent to believing an advertising slogan at the time that smoking L&M cigarettes was "just what the doctor ordered." And just as McMurty's song suggests, our parents sat outside oblivious, fanning themselves with their evening cocktails in hand gushing, "oh, looooook … awwww, how cuuuute ... kids ... Mosquito Man ..." and would laugh at how adorable we all looked smiling in ecstasy riding along in a cool, wet cloud of pure DDT. From those episodes, I have often stopped to wonder if that is why I have remained free of many viruses now feared. That by all odds, I should have contracted long ago with all my excessive bad habits through the years. Maybe DDT was a miracle drug of some kind.

Hughson was founded in 1907. It was named after Hiram Hughson, who owned much of the land at one time. The Indians had referred to it as "a place of sleep," and it wasn't really much more than a whistle stop along the Santa Fe railroad line. For no apparent reason, its main street is the remarkable width of a four lane freeway, which is absurdly wide for only being seven blocks long. The buildings that lined the street bore facades much like towns of the old west, but of concrete rather than wood. This was the style of architecture that was typical of California valley towns in the early 20th century, that is now being replaced by the latest architectural contribution to the modern Americana aesthetic: the strip mall.

In 2007 the town will celebrate its centennial. There will be a parade down Main Street, the unveiling of a life size bronze sculpture of a migrant peach picker, and a "bean feed" among other events. Somewhere deep in the nostalgia of this small town was this cherished annual event called The Bean Feed that is being resurrected from the annals of Hughson history that was little more than what its name implies: a town feed of beans and a slice of white bread with butter on a paper plate. But the Bean Feed was a festive occasion. It equaled some of the local harvest parties where a pig would be sacrificed and roasted underground by some distinguished Mexican cooks, pallets of Lucky Lager beer would arrive, mariachi bands would play, and everyone got drunk and danced while us kids tried to sneak off with six-packs of beer.

There was something unique about this small town and the people it produced that is hard to put your finger on. Not that anyone will point out anyone of national importance from there, or a celebrity like neighboring Modesto with its George Lucas who epitomized his town with the movie American Graffiti. But much like the Lucas movie, coming of age in Hughson around that era had a very similar flavor of that which was portrayed that infused its people with a rare down to earth quality that you rarely find in today's neurotic world.

The town on weekend nights was the scene of adolescent youth courting, flirting, getting drunk, and creating general mayhem ... cruising in cars back and forth on Main Street, making U-turn after U-turn at each end and cruising back again, eventually pulling up to others who were parked either along the street or in the dirt parking lot of M & M's Drive-In that took up the whole block at the top of the street. M & M's was our Mel's Drive-In, except occasionally some daring soul would fly into its dirt lot with their car doing wild donuts and "rooster tails," satisfied at creating an enormous cloud of dust.

Across the street, standing side by side were the town's only two bars. One of these bars was frequented by Mexicans, and the other one by whites, and only a "bad ass" dared to go in either one. In valley towns like Hughson, you were either the toughest, had the fastest car, could drink the most, or risked some other dare devil craziness to prove your manhood ... that you were "bad." Fights and town rivalries over sports and anything else were the fashion. There were always "rumbles" between town football teams in school parking lots after the games, and to even be caught cruising in a neighboring town could prove threatening.

On top of that, the town had a bit of its own racial tensions. Despite the demographic breakdown offered by consensus figures, in Hughson it seemed you were either Italian, Portuguese, Mexican, or “Okie.” The Italians had come there to be farmers, the Portuguese to be dairymen, and the Okies were those who had poured in from Oklahoma after the Dustbowl to work the fields in classic Woody Guthrie narrative, to be replaced by the Mexicans years later. There was friction between the latter that probably started over jobs. We knew little of the kind of prejudice that was prevalent towards blacks back then, or of the anti-Semitism discussed in WWII history for example. We had no "Afro Americans" in that town. We had mixtures of everything else. All we knew was that "Negros" produced most of the hit records on the charts, and thought to be Jewish was just another religion. But there was this racism between the Okies and the Mexicans and the two town bars frequently erupted in violence on the street outside.

The town was violent, but only to a point. I watched people get in fights, friends get killed racing cars, and saw a policeman lie dying on the street, shot in a thwarted bank robbery attempt of our little town bank that shocked the town to its core. It was still the Old West fifties style to be sure, but we never locked doors, and the only big robbery we had heard about until then, was when the owner of the Five and Dime was rumored to have previously tried to tunnel into the same bank that was next door. For the most part, the most we feared was getting caught smoking in the school bathroom. Guns were for hunting or shooting mailboxes and

stop signs, and they were readily available on our farms but no one could even dream of using one for assault, and certainly not to bring to school or town. It was all fists and feet.

Farming was the industry and peaches were king. The town once held the title of Peach Capital of the World (in cling peaches as Georgia held the title for freestone peaches). The town came alive in the summers as the harvest approached. It was hot, tipping three-figures on the thermometer. We were out of school and working on family farms buzzing in the middle of the season with their smells of Mexican food and sounds of Mexican music filling the air from farmhand cabins. We eagerly waited for when we could sneak away and go swimming in the canals, race cars, or cruise town in the hopes of finding a party or joining the ranks of couples making out on canal banks. On Sundays, neighboring Italian farm families got together following mass for huge meals at long tables with homemade wine and piles of ravioli.

It was a Norman Rockwell portrait of the golden age of postwar bliss. A little ambition would buy the American Dream. Fathers worked and mothers stayed home raising the kids. We had rotary phones, party lines, and operators who knew family names. There were no answering machines to get a message if you weren't home. The latest news was commonly spread word of mouth or through town gossip, and much of that was from Hamilton's Cafe, the community nerve center where farmers convened every morning to discuss their crops over breakfast. Families watched the same TV shows like Bonanza, Leave it to Beaver, Have Gun Will Travel, Twilight Zone, Ed Sullivan, and Combat, a WW2 series showing the last just war our fathers had just won. Our mothers watched Jack La Lane, As the World Turns, and Queen for a Day, which had to be the most politically incorrect thing since Al Jolson wore blackface. We saw Mysterious Island for 10 cents at our local movie theater. Gas was 37 cents a gallon. We could burn piled leaves in our yards. Dry cleaning and milk were delivered to your door, and the town doctor, a man who seemed to know everything, made house calls. It was all the latest in the modern nuclear age with TV trays, kidney shaped tables, and the Space Race.

Teenagers watched American Bandstand and did the Twist. There was some hushed war in Korea that we knew little about. And then came something called the Cuban Missile Crisis, and our town doctor who knew everything proudly built a fully functioning concrete bomb shelter and began rotating stocks of canned goods.

Soon after came the British Invasion and Mod was the fashion. We started watching Laugh In and Walter Cronkite began to talk about another hushed war in a place called Vietnam. Eventually that war began to claim even the lives of children from this town not on any maps that few had even heard of. People started to wonder as we started hearing of protests.

I watched Woodstock at the local drive-in theater as the 1967 Summer of Love arrived in our town in 1969. Marijuana started to replace booze, and we piled in cars to cruise country roads with nicknames like The Crooked Mile to smoke joints safely away from authoritarian eyes with our 8 tracks blaring, listening to the Rolling Stones, Ten Years After, and Led Zeppelin. There were no local police, and we had driven trucks and tractors since the age of 10, and many of us could drive as early as Junior High School. Just as was portrayed in American Graffiti, we lived in our cars, but all of a sudden cruising became slower as we got more stoned.

I tried LSD, listening to Iron Butterfly's "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" over and over on my portable phonograph. I started wearing fringed jackets, paisley Nehru shirts, suede moccasins, or black Beatle boots, and I watched our town become less violent as people cruising in cars flipped peace signs instead of the finger. Rivalries and fighting stopped, replaced by brotherhood and our attempt at being flower children. As we neared

graduation, we began to think about the draft and our options other than following the war blindly. We saw JFK assassinated, followed by Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. We saw civil rights movements and civil disobedience. It was the beginning of the end of the last innocent generation, and I was about to graduate.

Following graduation, our doctor who knew everything took his life, followed by my father, whose increasing bouts of depression from a little-known syndrome called Manic Depression become too chronic for him to bear. With little time to think, the family farm was sold to pay the inheritance taxes, and with what was left, I went off to art school and to see the world, eventually moving to the coast. I never lived here again.

I never grew up. I never had kids. The rare times I have returned were either for a class reunion, a funeral, or a quick sentimental journey down Main Street when passing within proximity on my way somewhere else, and when I did, I sometimes wondered why anyone settled here in the first place. I have been physically, mentally, and spiritually almost everywhere. I've had my picture taken with Jackie and Aristotle Onassis on the island of Capri. I've sunk a ship in the Caribbean, shot the rapids of the Pequari River, been thrown into a dungeon in Bangkok, and made the pilgrimages to Burning Man in the Nevada Desert. I think I've been a puppet, a pauper, a poet, a pawn, and maybe not quite a king, but to this day, no matter where I am, there is a maudlin feeling that comes over me with the end of a summer and the coming of fall. It's hard to shake. It's ingrained in me. It's the feeling of a time when the winds come, and the leaves fall off the peach trees, leaving nothing but bare branches as they go dormant for the cold season ahead. The Mexicans would leave town on their sojourns back home for the winter, and the farm would become a deserted wasteland. The canals would go dry. Everything seemed to go black and white. And with all of this, I would have to face going back to school and wait for spring ... when everything would blossom, the Mexicans would return, the music would begin, and we could go swimming in the canals.

Mark Bava is an event producer, musician and artist now residing in Carmel California.

* My Back Pages - song by Bob Dylan (1964)
"Ah, but I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now …"

Hughson Celebrates Its Centennial This Weekend

By Jeff Benziger

An article in the Ceres Courier announcing the Hughson Centennial:

Hughson Celebrates Its Centennial This Weekend
https://www.cerescourier.com/news/hughson-celebrates-its-centennial-this-weekend/

September 19, 2007

Hughson turns 100 years old this month and there will be a celebration worthy of a hundred-year wait on Saturday, Sept. 22.

A full day of celebration is being organized by the Hughson Historical Society, the Hughson Centennial Celebration Committee, and the city of Hughson. "A Small Community With A Big Heart" is the guiding theme for the free event, which includes an all-day Main Street fair, that is open to the general public.

Hughson's township was filed in 1907. It didn't become an incorporated city until 1971.

From 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hughson Avenue will be converted into a fair. Free entertainment will be offered as well as displays of vintage automobiles, tractors and motorcycles. A Dust Bowl Days display will be available as well as commercial booths for shoppers. Food booths will feed the crowd.

A parade at 11 a.m. will pay tribute to Hughson's past and will feature a wide range of antique vehicles including a Wells Fargo stagecoach.

Activities for the children will include a petting zoo, pumpkin maze, jumping bins, kiddie tractor pull, and Centennial Children's Area.

A larger-than-life statue of a peach picker, called "The Harvest" - commissioned by Oakdale artist Betty Saletta - will be unveiled at 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 22 at the corner of Charles and Hughson Avenue. The intersection has recently been rehabilitated into a showcase intersection complete with brick, planters and street furniture. Donors who helped pay for the statue will be recognized on bronze plaques at its base.

Inscribed paving bricks honoring or memorializing family or friends were sold to help raise funds and will be a central part of the Centennial Plaza design.

Hughson was once known for the peaches grown in its fields; hence the harvester was seen as an appropriate tribute.

A time capsule with memorabilia from 2007 will be placed at Centennial Plaza.

"Years ago, Hughson used to have a Tractor Rodeo and free beans so we're going to have that again," said Jean Henley, a member of the Hughson Historical Society.

Free peaches will also be given away.

The Hughson Historical Museum, located in the old Gillette Hotel which was moved from downtown Ceres in 1907, will be open for the day. The museum is located on Hughson Avenue.

A wide range of other food will be available for purchase, as well as centennial DVD's, T-shirts, polo shirts and hats. Shirts and hats may be purchased in advance at Bank of the West in Hughson or at the event.

A limited number of bronze maquettes of "The Harvest" are still available. A portion of the purchase of these 18-inch versions of the finished sculpture goes to the Hughson Historical Society.

Funeral Playlist

Agnus Dei [The Scarlet Letter]
6:15
Samuel Barber
Cinema Choral Classics

Be Here Now
6:25
Ray LaMontagne
Till the Sun Turns Black

Classical Gas
3:06
Mason Williams
Phonograph Record

For Emily, Whenever I May Find Her [Live]
2:22
Simon & Garfunkel
The Best of Simon & Garfunkel

From Russia With Love Theme
2:52
John Barry
More Music to Spy By

Gloomy Sunday
3:48
Sarah Brightman
La Luna

Goldfinger
3:03
John Barry
Music to Spy By

Heart of Gold
3:07
Neil Young
Decade [Disc 2]

I Am a Rock
2:52
Simon & Garfunkel
The Best of Simon & Garfunkel

The James Bond Theme
2:14
John Arnold
The Best of Bond … James Bond

James Bond Theme
2:00
John Barry Orchestra
Spy Magazine Presents Spy Music, Volume 1

Jerusalem
2:35
Herb Alpert & The Tijuana Brass
Classics, Vol. 1

Lara's Theme from "Doctor Zhivago"
5:48
Erich Kunzel & The Cincinnati Pops Orchestra
Hollywood's Greatest Hits Volume 1

The Little Drummer Boy
3:15
Henry Mancini
A Merry Mancini Christmas

Love Theme From Romeo & Juliet
2:36
Henry Mancini
Collection

Lucky Man
4:41
Emerson, Lake & Palmer
Best of Emerson, Lake & Palmer

Minstrel of the Dawn
3:28
Gordon Lightfoot
Gord's Gold

The Mystic's Dream
7:43
Loreena McKennitt
The Mask and Mirror

Old Man
3:24
Neil Young
Three

On the Road to Find Out
5:08
Cat Stevens
Tea for the Tillerman

Over The Rainbow
3:32
Israel Kamakawiwo'ole
Alone In IZ World

Prologue
2:13
John Williams
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Watermark
2:24
Enya
Watermark

Silent Night
3:47
Enya
The Christmas EP

Orinoco Flow
3:44
Enya
Watermark

Water shows the hidden heart
3:09
Enya
Amarantine

The Sounds of Hatari
6:47
Henry Mancini
Pink Panther and Other Hits

Stairway to Heaven
8:03
Led Zeppelin
Led Zeppelin IV (1994 Remaster)

Stupid (Worakls Remix)
7:02
N.T.O.
Stupid (Remixes)

Tapestry
3:14
Carole King
Tapestry

Thunderball Theme
2:18
John Barry
More Music To Spy By

Variations on the Kanon by Pachelbel
5:23
George Winston
December

007 Theme
3:01
John Barry
Music to Spy By

The Wind
1:42
Cat Stevens
Teaser and the Firecat

Young Girl's Funeral
0:42
Rachel Portman
The Cider House Rules

Any Other Name
4:06
Thomas Newman

American Beauty

Cleopatra in New York
4:32
Nickodemus
Cleopatra in New York

The Promise
4:19
Michael Nyman
The Piano

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly
2:38
Ennio Morricone
The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
Original Motion Picture Soundtrack

Sleep, Dearie, Sleep
2:16
The Lone Piper
The Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II

Evolution of The Stillness Before Time

A timeline of phases in this little raison d'être project that began in 1989.

Ojai

Teaching at Oak Grove School in Ojai, California
Head and neck injury at Carpinteria State Beach on school fieldtrip
Psilocybin mushrooms & ecstasy
Nisargadatta's "I Am That"
The first index cards, tossed after Lena's comment

Chico

A box of spiral-bound notebooks
Access to a desktop computer at Chico Hedway
Dean Evans and two art shows
A book agent who had me put together The Stillness Before Time
Including: Of the Human Journey, Got God?, Ten Reflections, Books, Movies
Kinko's and who knows how many spiral-bound copies out the back door

Arcata

More spiral-bound notebooks
CLAD certificate program at Humboldt State
First Apple PowerBook 5300 laptop
HTML programming class
Creation of The Stillness Before Time website

Turlock

Switch to index cards
Creative Alternatives and transfer of website
Five generations of Apple MacBook laptops through the years
Several attempts to publish, with support from Dawn Eden Fletcher and Ram Dass
The Return to Wonder
Matrix algorithm experiment
Google Blogger
Facebook
Twitter
The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim
Breadcrumbs series
Lulu Press
Retirement from Creative Alternatives
Transfer of website to Network Solutions
Evolution of website
A variety of offshoot titles

Sivana East
Instagram
Transfer of website to Skystra
Switch to smart phone texting
Editing of Stillness, Ponderings, Return to Wonder
The quest for a legacy caretaker

Just a Clarification

Just a clarification that some titles are original works, and some are selections from the originals. Please note, dear reader, that nothing is complete, nothing is finished, until the last wheezing breath. And that the most recent, most accurate edits, will be the PDF versions uploaded to the website.

The Original Works

The Stillness Before Time,
Reflections From a Fellow Sojourner

Including:
Of the Human Journey
Got God?
Ten Reflections

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim

The Breadcrumbs Compendium
Bits and Pieces From a Dream of Time

Breadcrumbs 2015
Breadcrumbs 2018
Breadcrumbs 2019
Breadcrumbs 2020
Breadcrumbs 2021
Breadcrumbs 2022
Breadcrumbs 2023 & Beyond

The Return to Wonder
Field Notes from the Unknown

The Sidebar Collection

A Short List of Books for the Up and Coming
Some Written Works That May Help Get the Young Up to Speed

Conversations
A Variety of Letters, Emails, Texts, & Sundry Odds 'n Ends

Definitions
An Incomplete Selection of Contemplative Definitions

Ditties for the Bluegrass Pyre

Jester Amok

My (Not Quite) Haiku

Once Upon a Christmas

Possible Last Words & Epitaphs

Sketches of the Once Upon a Time
A Few Epiphanies and Other Hallmark Moments

Spam Responses (a.k.a., WTF Is This Shit!?)

The Corollaries of Yaj Ekim

The Standard Ripostes
The Scribe's Go-to Responses to This and That in the Day-To-Day

Uncle Sam Says

The titles below are selections drawn from the original works above, based on the premise of the title.
Several will very likely still be 'under construction' if the Reaper arrives ahead of sketch.
So … anyone who might be motivated, is welcome to fill in any-and-all gaps,
Being as mindful as possible, to hold fast to the given formatting.
There may or may not be someone to answer inquiries,
At the mjholshouser@gmail.com address.

The Derivative Collection

Aftershocks Autumn 2024

Frames of Reference
Peering Through the Windows of Perception

Imagination: The Great Usurper

Jesus on Prophets
What Any Seer Likely Faces Returning to the Cave of Origin

Lost in Translation
The Human Paradigm's Linguistic Muddle

Michael's Rabbit Hole
A Selection of Breadcrumbs & Other Aphorisms

Of Meaning and Purpose

Ponderings About the Futility of It All

Of Noise & Silence
Contemplations on the Vibrations of Consciousness

Standouts From the Return to Wonder Edit
Selections From the First Sixteen Chapters

The Call of the Eternal
A Conversation With My Self

The Gordian Knot of Ethical Thinking

The 'And More' Collection

Doubt, Doubt & More Doubt

Grubs, Grubs & More Grubs

History, History & More History

Imagination, Imagination & More Imagination

Mystery, Mystery & More Mystery

Patterns, Patterns & More Patterns

Reincarnation, Reincarnation & More Reincarnation

Science, Science & More Science

Titles, Titles & More Titles

Even More Titles, Titles & More Titles

The Singles Collection

59 Moments to The Way It Is (And Is Not)

Of the Human Journey
Along with 'Got God?' and 'Ten Reflections'

The Mystery of the Mystery

The Real is Discovering

To Be, or Not to Be

Who Was the First?

Breadcrumbs 2023 & Beyond

Another Way of Putting It

Almost everything written since 1989, probably in the neighborhood of five or six thousand pages at this writing, has been transcribed in MS Word format in the Times New Roman font, and is divided into ten main titles: The Stillness Before Time, The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim, The Return to Wonder, and Breadcrumbs 2015 through 2023. Other titles are sidebar original works or derivatives that came to the a-puttering mind in the hither-thither. There are many incomplete and need-editing works in the derivative list.

The Original Works

The Stillness Before Time,
Reflections From a Fellow Sojourner

Including:
Of the Human Journey
Got God?
Ten Reflections

The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim

The Breadcrumbs Compendium
Bits and Pieces From a Dream of Time

Breadcrumbs 2015
Breadcrumbs 2018
Breadcrumbs 2019
Breadcrumbs 2020
Breadcrumbs 2021
Breadcrumbs 2022
Breadcrumbs 2023 & Beyond

The Return to Wonder

The Sidebar Collection

A Short List of Books for the Up and Coming
Conversations
Definitions
Ditties for the Bluegrass Pyre
Jester Amok
My (Not Quite) Haiku
Once Upon a Christmas
Possible Last Words & Epitaphs
Sketches of the Once Upon a Time
Spam Responses (a.k.a., WTF Is This Shit!?)

The Corollaries of Yaj Ekim
The Standard Ripostes
Uncle Sam Says

The Derivative Collection

Aftershocks Autumn 2024
Frames of Reference
Imagination: The Great Usurper
Jesus on Prophets
Lost in Translation
Michael's Rabbit Hole
Of Meaning and Purpose
Of Noise & Silence
Standouts From the Return to Wonder Edit
The Call of the Eternal
The Gordian Knot of Ethical Thinking

The 'And More' Collection

Doubt, Doubt & More Doubt
Grubs, Grubs & More Grubs
History, History & More History
Imagination, Imagination & More Imagination
Mystery, Mystery & More Mystery
Patterns, Patterns & More Patterns
Reincarnation, Reincarnation & More Reincarnation
Science, Science & More Science
Titles, Titles & More Titles
Even More Titles, Titles & More Titles

The Singles Collection

59 Moments to The Way It Is (And Is Not)
Of the Human Journey
The Mystery of the Mystery
The Real is Discovering
To Be, or Not to Be
Who Was the First?

Breadcrumbs 2024 & Beyond